ANECDOTES

OF THE LATE

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

APOPHTHEGMS

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DURING THE LAST

TWENTY YEARS OF HIS LIFE.

BY

HESTHER LYNCH PIOZZI.

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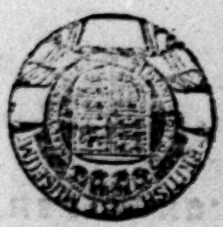

John Platt

PREFACE.

I HAVE ſomewhere heard or read, that the Preface before a book, like the portico before a houſe, ſhould be contrived, ſo as to catch, but not detain the attention of thoſe who deſire admiſſion to the family within, or leave to look over the collection of pictures made by one whoſe opportunities of obtaining them we know to have been not unfrequent. I wiſh not to keep my readers long from ſuch intimacy with the manners of Dr. Johnſon, or ſuch knowledge of his ſentiments as theſe pages can convey. To urge my diſtance from England as an excuſe for the book's being ill written, would be ridiculous; it might indeed ſerve as a juſt reaſon for

my having written it at all; becauſe, though others may print the ſame aphoriſms and ſtories, I cannot *here* be ſure that they have done ſo. As the Duke ſays however to the Weaver, in A Midſummer Night's Dream, "Never excuſe; if your play be a bad one, keep at leaſt the excuſes to yourſelf."

I am aware that many will ſay, I have not ſpoken highly enough of Dr. Johnſon; but it will be difficult for thoſe who ſay ſo, to ſpeak more highly. If I have deſcribed his manners as they were, I have been careful to ſhew his ſuperiority to the common forms of common life. It is ſurely no diſpraiſe to an oak that it does not bear jeſſamine; and he who ſhould plant honeyſuckle round Trajan's column, would not be thought to adorn, but to diſgrace it.

When I have ſaid, that he was more a man of genius than of learning, I mean not to take from the one part of his character that which I willingly give to the other. The erudition of Mr. Johnſon proved his genius; for he had not acquired it by long or profound ſtudy: nor can I think thoſe characters the greateſt which have moſt learning driven into their heads, any more than I can perſuade myſelf to conſider the river Jeniſca as ſuperior to the Nile, becauſe the firſt receives near ſeventy tributary ſtreams in the courſe of its unmarked progreſs to the ſea, while the great parent of African plenty, flowing from an almoſt inviſible ſource, and unenriched by any extraneous waters, except eleven nameleſs rivers, pours his majeſtic torrent into the ocean by ſeven celebrated mouths.

But I muſt conclude my Preface, and begin my book, the firſt I ever preſented before the Public; from whoſe awful appearance in ſome meaſure to defend and conceal myſelf, I have thought fit to retire behind the Telamonian ſhield, and ſhew as little of myſelf as poſſible; well aware of the exceeding difference there is, between fencing in the ſchool and fighting in the field.——Studious however to avoid offending, and careleſs of that offence which can be taken without a cauſe, I here not unwillingly ſubmit my ſlight performance to the deciſion of that glorious country, which I have the daily delight to hear applauded in others, as eminently juſt, generous, and humane.

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TOO much intelligence is often as pernicious to Biography as too little; the mind remains perplexed by contradiction of probabilities, and finds difficulty in ſeparating report from truth. If Johnſon then lamented that ſo little had ever been ſaid about Butler, I might

with more reaſon be led to complain that ſo much has been ſaid about himſelf; for numberleſs informers but diſtract or cloud information, as glaſſes which multiply will for the moſt part be found alſo to obſcure. Of a life too, which for the laſt twenty years was paſſed in the very front of literature, every leader of a literary company, whether officer or ſubaltern, naturally becomes either author or critic, ſo that little leſs than the recollection that it was *once* the requeſt of the deceaſed, and *twice* the deſire of thoſe whoſe will I ever delighted to comply with, ſhould have engaged me to add my little book to the number of thoſe already written on the ſubject. I uſed to urge another reaſon for forbearance, and ſay, that all the readers would, on this ſingular occaſion, be the writers of his life: like the firſt repreſentation of the Maſque of Comus, which, by changing their characters from ſpectators to performers, was *acted* by the

lords and ladies it was *written* to entertain. This objection is however now at an end, as I have found friends, far remote indeed from literary queſtions, who may yet be diverted from melancholy by my deſcription of Johnſon's manners, warmed to virtue even by the diſtant reflexion of his glowing excellence, and encouraged by the relation of his animated zeal to perſiſt in the profeſſion as well as practice of Chriſtianity.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was the ſon of Michael Johnſon, a bookſeller at Litchfield, in Staffordſhire; a very pious and worthy man, but wrong-headed, poſitive, and afflicted with melancholy, as his ſon, from whom alone I had the information, once told me: his buſineſs, however, leading him to be much on horſeback, contributed to the preſervation of his bodily health, and mental ſanity; which, when he ſtaid long at home, would ſometimes be about to give way;

and Mr. Johnſon ſaid, that when his work-ſhop, a detached building, had fallen half down for want of money to repair it, his father was not leſs diligent to lock the door every night, though he ſaw that any body might walk in at the back part, and knew that there was no ſecurity obtained by barring the front door. "*This* (ſays his ſon) was madneſs, you may ſee, and would have been diſcoverable in other inſtances of the prevalence of imagination, but that poverty prevented it from playing ſuch tricks as riches and leiſure encourage." Michael was a man of ſtill larger ſize and greater ſtrength than his ſon, who was reckoned very like him, but did not delight in talking much of his family—"one has (ſays he) *ſo* little pleaſure in reciting the anecdotes of beggary." One day, however, hearing me praiſe a favourite friend with partial tenderneſs as well as true eſteem; "Why do you like that man's acquaintance ſo?" ſaid he: Becauſe,

replied I, he is open and confiding, and tells me ſtories of his uncles and couſins; I love the light parts of a ſolid character. "Nay, if you are for family hiſtory (ſays Mr. Johnſon good-humouredly), *I* can fit you: I had an uncle, Cornelius Ford, who, upon a journey, ſtopped and read an inſcription written on a ſtone he ſaw ſtanding by the way-ſide, ſet up, as it proved, in honour of a man who had leaped a certain leap thereabouts, the extent of which was ſpecified upon the ſtone: Why now, ſays my uncle, I could leap it in my boots; and he did leap it in his boots. I had likewiſe another uncle, Andrew, continued he, my father's brother, who kept the ring in Smithfield (where they wreſtled and boxed) for a whole year, and never was thrown or conquered. Here now are uncles for you, Miſtreſs, if that's the way to your heart." Mr. Johnſon was very converſant in the art of attack and defence by boxing, which

ſcience he had learned from this uncle Andrew, I believe; and I have heard him deſcant upon the age when people were received, and when rejected, in the ſchools once held for that brutal amuſement, much to the admiration of thoſe who had no expectation of his ſkill in ſuch matters, from the ſight of a figure which precluded all poſſibility of perſonal proweſs; though, becauſe he ſaw Mr. Thrale one day leap over a cabriolet ſtool, to ſhew that he was not tired after a chace of fifty miles or more, *he* ſuddenly jumped over it too; but in a way ſo ſtrange and ſo unwieldy, that our terror leſt he ſhould break his bones, took from us even the power of laughing.

Michael Johnſon was paſt fifty years old when he married his wife, who was upwards of forty; yet I think her ſon told me ſhe remained three years childleſs before he was born into the world, who

ſo greatly contributed to improve it. In three years more ſhe brought another ſon, Nathaniel, who lived to be twenty-ſeven or twenty-eight years old, and of whoſe manly ſpirit I have heard his brother ſpeak with pride and pleaſure, mentioning one circumſtance, particular enough, that when the company were one day lamenting the badneſs of the roads, he enquired where they could be, as he travelled the country more than moſt people, and had never ſeen a bad road in his life. The two brothers did not, however, much delight in each other's company, being always rivals for the mother's fondneſs; and many of the ſevere reflections on domeſtic life in Raſſelas, took their ſource from its author's keen recollections of the time paſſed in his early years. Their father Michael died of an inflammatory fever, at the age of ſeventy-ſix, as Mr. Johnſon told me: their mother at eighty-nine, of a gradual decay. She was ſlight in her per-

ſon, he ſaid, and rather below than above the common ſize. So excellent was her character, and ſo blameleſs her life, that when an oppreſſive neighbour once endeavoured to take from her a little field ſhe poſſeſſed, he could perſuade no attorney to undertake the cauſe againſt a woman ſo beloved in her narrow circle: and it is this incident he alludes to in the line of his Vanity of Human Wiſhes, calling her

The general favourite as the general friend.

Nor could any one pay more willing homage to ſuch a character, though ſhe had not been related to him, than did Dr. Johnſon on every occaſion that offered: his diſquiſition on Pope's epitaph placed over Mrs. Corbet, is a proof of that preference always given by him to a noiſeleſs life over a buſtling one; for however taſte begins, we almoſt always ſee that it ends in ſimplicity; the glutton

finiſhes by loſing his reliſh for any thing highly ſauced, and calls for his boiled chicken at the cloſe of many years ſpent in the ſearch of dainties; the connoiſſeurs are ſoon weary of Rubens, and the critics of Lucan; and the refinements of every kind heaped upon civil life, always ſicken their poſſeſſors before the cloſe of it.

At the age of two years Mr. Johnſon was brought up to London by his mother, to be touched by Queen Anne for the ſcrophulous evil, which terribly afflicted his childhood, and left ſuch marks as greatly disfigured a countenance naturally harſh and rugged, beſide doing irreparable damage to the auricular organs, which never could perform their functions ſince I knew him; and it was owing to that horrible diſorder, too, that one eye was perfectly uſeleſs to him; that defect, however, was not obſervable, the eyes looked both alike. As

Mr. Johnſon had an aſtoniſhing memory, I aſked him, if he could remember Queen Anne at all? "He had (he ſaid) a confuſed, but ſomehow a ſort of ſolemn recollection of a lady in diamonds, and a long black hood."

The chriſtening of his brother he remembered with all its circumſtances, and ſaid, his mother taught him to ſpell and pronounce the words *little Natty*, ſyllable by ſyllable, making him ſay it over in the evening to her huſband and his gueſts. The trick which moſt parents play with their children, of ſhewing off their newly-acquired accompliſhments, diſguſted Mr. Johnſon beyond expreſſion; he had been treated ſo himſelf, he ſaid, till he abſolutely loathed his father's careſſes, becauſe he knew they were ſure to precede ſome unpleaſing diſplay of his early abilities; and he uſed, when neighbours came o'viſit-

ing, to run up a tree that he might not be found and exhibited, ſuch, as no doubt he was, a prodigy of early underſtanding. His epitaph upon the duck he killed by treading on it at five years old,

Here lies poor duck
That Samuel Johnſon trod on;
If it had liv'd it had been good luck,
For it would have been an odd one;

is a ſtriking example of early expanſion of mind, and knowledge of language; yet he always ſeemed more mortified at the recollection of the buſtle his parents made with his wit, than pleaſed with the thoughts of poſſeſſing it. "That (ſaid he to me one day) is the great miſery of late marriages; the unhappy produce of them becomes the plaything of dotage: an old man's child (continued he) leads much ſuch a life, I think, as a little boy's dog, teized with awkward fond-

neſs, and forced, perhaps, to ſit up and beg, as we call it, to divert a company, who at laſt go away complaining of their diſagreeable entertainment." In conſequence of theſe maxims, and full of indignation againſt ſuch parents as delight to produce their young ones early into the talking world, I have known Mr. Johnſon give a good deal of pain, by refuſing to hear the verſes the children could recite, or the ſongs they could ſing; particularly one friend who told him that his two ſons ſhould repeat Gray's Elegy to him alternately, that he might judge who had the happieſt cadence. "No, pray Sir (ſaid he), let the dears both ſpeak it at once; more noiſe will by that means be made, and the noiſe will be ſooner over." He told me the ſtory himſelf, but I have forgot who the father was.

Mr. Johnſon's mother was daughter to a gentleman in the country, ſuch as

there were many of in thoſe days, who poſſeſſing, perhaps, one or two hundred pounds a year in land, lived on the profits, and ſought not to increaſe their income: ſhe was therefore inclined to think higher of herſelf than of her huſband, whoſe conduct in money matters being but indifferent, ſhe had a trick of teizing him about it, and was, by her ſon's account, very importunate with regard to her fears of ſpending more than they could afford, though ſhe never arrived at knowing how much that was; a fault common, as he ſaid, to moſt women who pride themſelves on their œconomy. They did not however, as I could underſtand, live ill together on the whole: "my father (ſays he) could always take his horſe and ride away for orders when things went badly." The lady's maiden name was Ford; and the parſon who ſits next to the punch-bowl in Hogarth's Modern Midnight Converſation was her brother's ſon. This Ford

was a man who choſe to be eminent only for vice, with talents that might have made him conſpicuous in literature, and reſpectable in any profeſſion he could have choſen: his couſin has mentioned him in the lives of Fenton and of Broome; and when he ſpoke of him to me, it was always with tenderneſs, praiſing his acquaintance with life and manners, and recollecting one piece of advice that no man ſurely ever followed more exactly: "Obtain (ſays Ford) ſome general principles of every ſcience; he who can talk only on one ſubject, or act only in one department, is ſeldom wanted, and perhaps never wiſhed for; while the man of general knowledge can often benefit, and always pleaſe." He uſed to relate, however, another ſtory leſs to the credit of his couſin's penetration, how Ford on ſome occaſion ſaid to him, "You will make your way the more eaſily in the world, I ſee, as you are contented to diſpute no man's claim

to converſation excellence; they will, therefore, more willingly allow your pretenſions as a writer." Can one, on ſuch an occaſion, forbear recollecting the predictions of Boileau's father, when ſtroaking the head of the young ſatiriſt, *Ce petit bon homme* (ſays he) *n'à point trop d'eſprit*, mais il ne *dira jamais mal de perſonne*. Such are the prognoſtics formed by men of wit and ſenſe, as theſe two certainly were, concerning the future character and conduct of thoſe for whoſe welfare they were honeſtly and deeply concerned; and ſo late do thoſe features of peculiarity come to their growth, which mark a character to all ſucceeding generations.

Dr. Johnſon firſt learned to read of his mother and her old maid Catharine, in whoſe lap he well remembered ſitting while ſhe explained to him the ſtory of St. George and the Dragon. I know not whether this is the proper place to

add, that ſuch was his tenderneſs, and ſuch his gratitude, that he took a journey to Litchfield fifty-ſeven years afterwards to ſupport and comfort her in her laſt illneſs; he had enquired for his nurſe, and ſhe was dead. The recollection of ſuch reading as had delighted him in his infancy, made him always perſiſt in fancying that it was the only reading which could pleaſe an infant; and he uſed to condemn me for putting Newbery's books into their hands as too trifling to engage their attention. "Babies do not want (ſaid he) to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and caſtles, and of ſomewhat which can ſtretch and ſtimulate their little minds." When in anſwer I would urge the numerous editions and quick ſale of Tommy Prudent or Goody Two Shoes: "Remember always (ſaid he) that the parents *buy* the books, and that the children never read them." Mrs. Barbauld however had his beſt praiſe, and deſerved it; no man was

more ſtruck than Mr. Johnſon with voluntary deſcent from poſſible ſplendour to painful duty.

At eight years old he went to ſchool, for his health would not permit him to be ſent ſooner; and at the age of ten years his mind was diſturbed by ſcruples of infidelity, which preyed upon his ſpirits, and made him very uneaſy; the more ſo, as he revealed his uneaſineſs to no one, being naturally (as he ſaid) "of a ſullen temper and reſerved diſpoſition." He ſearched, however, diligently but fruitleſsly, for evidences of the truth of revelation; and at length recollecting a book he had once ſeen in his father's ſhop, intitled, *De Veritate Religionis, &c.* he began to think himſelf highly culpable for neglecting ſuch a means of information, and took himſelf ſeverely to taſk for this ſin, adding many acts of voluntary, and to others unknown, penance. The firſt opportunity which

offered (of courſe) he ſeized the book with avidity; but on examination, not finding himſelf ſcholar enough to peruſe its contents, ſet his heart at reſt; and, not thinking to enquire whether there were any Engliſh books written on the ſubject, followed his uſual amuſements, and conſidered his conſcience as lightened of a crime. He redoubled his diligence to learn the language that contained the information he moſt wiſhed for; but from the pain which guilt had given him, he now began to deduce the ſoul's immortality, which was the point that belief firſt ſtopped at; and from that moment reſolving to be a Chriſtian, became one of the moſt zealous and pious ones our nation ever produced. When he had told me this odd anecdote of his childhood; "I cannot imagine (ſaid he) what makes me talk of myſelf to you ſo, for I really never mentioned this fooliſh ſtory to any body except Dr. Taylor, not even to my *dear dear* Ba-

thurſt, whom I loved better than ever I loved any human creature; but poor Bathurſt is dead!!!"—Here a long pauſe and a few tears enſued. Why Sir, ſaid I, how like is all this to Jean Jaques Rouſſeau! as like, I mean, as the ſenſations of froſt and fire, when my child complained yeſterday that the ice ſhe was eating *burned* her mouth. Mr. Johnſon laughed at the incongruous ideas; but the firſt thing which preſented itſelf to the mind of an ingenious and learned friend whom I had the pleaſure to paſs ſome time with here at Florence, was the ſame reſemblance, though I think the two characters had little in common, further than an early attention to things beyond the capacity of other babies, a keen ſenſibility of right and wrong, and a warmth of imagination little conſiſtent with ſound and perfect health. I have heard him relate another odd thing of himſelf too, but it is one which every body has heard as well as I: how,

when he was about nine years old, having got the play of Hamlet in his hand, and reading it quietly in his father's kitchen, he kept on ſteadily enough, till coming to the Ghoſt ſcene, he ſuddenly hurried up ſtairs to the ſtreet door that he might ſee people about him: ſuch an incident, as he was not unwilling to relate it, is probably in every one's poſſeſſion now; he told it as a teſtimony to the merits of Shakeſpeare: but one day when my ſon was going to ſchool, and dear Dr. Johnſon followed as far as the garden gate, praying for his ſalvation, in a voice which thoſe who liſtened attentively could hear plain enough, he ſaid to me ſuddenly, "Make your boy tell you his dreams: the firſt corruption that entered into my heart was communicated in a dream." What was it, Sir? ſaid I. "*Do* not aſk me," replied he with much violence, and walked away in apparent agitation. I never durſt make any further enquiries. He retained a ſtrong

averſion for the memory of Hunter, one of his ſchoolmaſters, who, he ſaid once, was a brutal fellow: "ſo brutal (added he), that no man who had been educated by him ever ſent his ſon to the ſame ſchool." I have however heard him acknowledge his ſcholarſhip to be very great. His next maſter he deſpiſed, as knowing leſs than himſelf, I found; but the name of that gentleman has ſlipped my memory. Mr. Johnſon was himſelf exceedingly diſpoſed to the general indulgence of children, and was even ſcrupulouſly and ceremoniouſly attentive not to offend them: he had ſtrongly perſuaded himſelf of the difficulty people always find to eraſe early impreſſions either of kindneſs or reſentment, and ſaid, "he ſhould never have ſo loved his mother when a man, had ſhe not given him coffee ſhe could ill afford, to gratify his appetite when a boy." If you had had children Sir, ſaid I, would you have taught them any thing? "I hope (re-

plied he), that I ſhould have willingly lived on bread and water to obtain inſtruction for them; but I would not have ſet their future friendſhip to hazard for the ſake of thruſting into their heads knowledge of things for which they might not perhaps have either taſte or neceſſity. You teach your daughters the diameters of the planets, and wonder when you have done that they do not delight in your company. No ſcience can be communicated by mortal creatures without attention from the ſcholar; no attention can be obtained from children without the infliction of pain, and pain is never remembered without reſentment." That ſomething ſhould be learned, was however ſo certainly his opinion, that I have heard him ſay, how education had been often compared to agriculture, yet that it reſembled it chiefly in this: "that if nothing is ſown, no crop (ſays he) can be obtained." His contempt of the lady who fancied her ſon could be emi-

nent without ſtudy, becauſe Shakeſpeare was found wanting in ſcholaſtic learning, was expreſſed in terms ſo groſs and ſo well known, I will not repeat them here.

To recollect, however, and to repeat the ſayings of Dr. Johnſon, is almoſt all that can be done by the writers of his life; as his life, at leaſt ſince my acquaintance with him, conſiſted in little elſe than talking, when he was not abſolutely employed in ſome ſerious piece of work; and whatever work he did, ſeemed ſo much below his powers of performance, that he appeared the idleſt of all human beings; ever muſing till he was called out to converſe, and converſing till the fatigue of his friends, or the promptitude of his own temper to take offence, conſigned him back again to ſilent meditation.

The remembrance of what had paſſed in his own childhood, made Mr. Johnſon

very ſolicitous to preſerve the felicity of children; and when he had perſuaded Dr. Sumner to remit the taſks uſually given to fill up boys' time during the holidays, he rejoiced exceedingly in the ſucceſs of his negociation, and told me that he had never ceaſed repreſenting to all the eminent ſchoolmaſters in England, the abſurd tyranny of poiſoning the hour of permitted pleaſure, by keeping future miſery before the children's eyes, and tempting them by bribery or falſehood to evade it. "Bob Sumner (ſaid he), however, I have at length prevailed upon: I know not indeed whether his tenderneſs was perſuaded, or his reaſon convinced, but the effect will always be the ſame." Poor Dr. Sumner died, however, before the next vacation.

Mr. Johnſon was of opinion, too, that young people ſhould have *poſitive* not *general* rules given for their direction. "My mother (ſaid he) was always tell-

ing me that I did not *behave* myſelf properly; that I ſhould endeavour to learn *behaviour*, and ſuch cant: but when I replied, that ſhe ought to tell me what to do, and what to avoid, her admonitions were commonly, for that time at leaſt, at an end."

This, I fear, was however at beſt a momentary refuge, found out by perverſeneſs. No man knew better than Johnſon in how many nameleſs and numberleſs actions *behaviour* conſiſts: actions which can ſcarcely be reduced to rule, and which come under no deſcription. Of theſe he retained ſo many very ſtrange ones, that I ſuppoſe no one who ſaw his odd manner of geſticulating, much blamed or wondered at the good lady's ſolicitude concerning her ſon's *behaviour*.

Though he was attentive to the peace of children in general, no man had a

ſtronger contempt than he for ſuch parents as openly profeſs that they cannot govern their children. "How (ſays he) is an army governed? Such people, for the moſt part, multiply prohibitions till obedience becomes impoſſible, and authority appears abſurd; and never ſuſpect that they teaſe their family, their friends, and themſelves, only becauſe converſation runs low, and ſomething muſt be ſaid."

Of parental authority, indeed, few people thought with a lower degree of eſtimation. I one day mentioned the reſignation of Cyrus to his father's will, as related by Xenophon, when, after all his conqueſts, he requeſted the conſent of Cambyſes to his marriage with a neighbouring princeſs; and I added Rollin's applauſe and recommendation of the example. "Do you not perceive then (ſays Johnſon), that Xenophon on this occaſion commends like a pedant,

and Pere Rollin applauds like a ſlave? If Cyrus by his conqueſts had not purchaſed emancipation, he had conquered to little purpoſe indeed. Can you bear to ſee the folly of a fellow who has in his care the lives of thouſands, when he begs his papa permiſſion to be married, and confeſſes his inability to decide in a matter which concerns no man's happineſs but his own?"—Mr. Johnſon caught me another time reprimanding the daughter of my houſekeeper for having ſat down unpermitted in her mother's preſence. "Why, ſhe gets her living, does ſhe not (ſaid he), without her mother's help? Let the wench alone," continued he. And when we were again out of the women's ſight who were concerned in the diſpute: "Poor people's children, dear Lady (ſaid he), never reſpect them: I did not reſpect my own mother, though I loved her: and one day, when in anger ſhe called me a puppy, I aſked her if ſhe knew

what they called a puppy's mother." We were talking of a young fellow who uſed to come often to the houſe; he was about fifteen years old, or leſs, if I remember right, and had a manner at once ſullen and ſheepiſh. "That lad (ſays Mr. Johnſon) looks like the ſon of a ſchoolmaſter; which (added he) is one of the very worſt conditions of childhood: ſuch a boy has no father, or worſe than none; he never can reflect on his parent but the reflection brings to his mind ſome idea of pain inflicted, or of ſorrow ſuffered."

I will relate one thing more that Dr. Johnſon ſaid about babyhood before I quit the ſubject; it was this: "That little people ſhould be encouraged always to tell whatever they hear particularly ſtriking, to ſome brother, ſiſter, or ſervant, immediately before the impreſſion is eraſed by the intervention of newer occurrences. He perfectly re-

membered the firſt time he ever heard of Heaven and Hell (he ſaid), becauſe when his mother had made out ſuch a deſcription of both places as ſhe thought likely to ſeize the attention of her infant auditor, who was then in bed with her, ſhe got up, and dreſſing him before the uſual time, ſent him directly to call a favourite workman in the houſe, to whom ſhe knew he would communicate the converſation while it was yet impreſſed upon his mind. The event was what ſhe wiſhed, and it was to that method chiefly that he owed his uncommon felicity of remembering diſtant occurrences, and long paſt converſations."

At the age of eighteen Dr. Johnſon quitted ſchool, and eſcaped from the tuition of thoſe he hated or thoſe he deſpiſed. I have heard him relate very few college adventures. He uſed to ſay that our beſt accounts of his behaviour there would be gathered from Dr. Adams

and Dr. Taylor, and that he was ſure they would always tell the truth. He told me however one day, how, when he was firſt entered at the univerſity, he paſſed a morning, in compliance with the cuſtoms of the place, at his tutor's chambers; but finding him no ſcholar, went no more. In about ten days after, meeting the ſame gentleman, Mr. Jordan, in the ſtreet, he offered to paſs by without ſaluting him; but the tutor ſtopped, and enquired, not roughly neither, What he had been doing? "Sliding on the ice," was the reply; and ſo turned away with diſdain. He laughed very heartily at the recollection of his own inſolence, and ſaid they endured it from him with wonderful acquieſcence, and a gentleneſs that, whenever he thought of it, aſtoniſhed himſelf. He told me too, that when he made his firſt declamation, he wrote over but one copy, and that coarſely; and having given it into the hand of the tutor who ſtood to receive

it as he paſſed, was obliged to begin by chance and continue on how he could, for he had got but little of it by heart; ſo fairly truſting to his preſent powers for immediate ſupply, he finiſhed by adding aſtoniſhment to the applauſe of all who knew how little was owing to ſtudy. A prodigious riſque, however, ſaid ſome one: "Not at all (exclaims Johnſon), no man I ſuppoſe leaps at once into deep water who does not know how to ſwim."

I doubt not but this ſtory will be told by many of his biographers, and ſaid ſo to him when he told it me on the 18th of July 1773. "And who will be my biographer (ſaid he), do you think?" Goldſmith, no doubt, replied I, and he will do it the beſt among us. "The dog would write it beſt to be ſure, replied he; but his particular malice towards me, and general diſregard for truth, would make the book uſeleſs to

all, and injurious to my character." Oh! as to that, ſaid I, we ſhould all faſten upon him, and force him to do you juſtice; but the worſt is, the Doctor does not *know* your life; nor can I tell indeed who does, except Dr. Taylor of Aſhbourne. "Why Taylor (ſaid he) is better acquainted with my *heart* than any man or woman now alive; and the hiſtory of my Oxford exploits lies all between him and Adams; but Dr. James knows my very early days better than he. After my coming to London to drive the world about a little, you muſt all go to Jack Hawkeſworth for anecdotes: I lived in great familiarity with him (though I think there was not much affection) from the year 1753 till the time Mr. Thrale and you took me up. I intend, however, to diſappoint the rogues, and either make you write the life, with Taylor's intelligence; or, which is better, do it myſelf, after outliving you all. I am now (added he),

keeping a diary, in hopes of uſing it for that purpoſe ſome time." Here the converſation ſtopped, from my accidentally looking in an old magazine of the year 1768, where I ſaw the following lines with his name to them, and aſked if they were his.

VERSES *ſaid to be written by Dr.* SAMUEL JOHNSON, *at the requeſt of a Gentleman to whom a Lady had given a Sprig of Myrtle.*

WHAT hopes, what terrors, does thy gift create,
Ambiguous emblem of uncertain fate:
The Myrtle, enſign of ſupreme command,
Conſign'd by Venus to Meliſſa's hand;
Not leſs capricious than a reigning fair,
Now grants, and now rejects a lover's prayer.
In myrtle ſhades oft ſings the happy ſwain,
In myrtle ſhades deſpairing ghoſts complain:
The myrtle crowns the happy lovers' heads,
Th' unhappy lover's grave the myrtle ſpreads:
O then the meaning of thy gift impart,
And eaſe the throbbings of an anxious heart!
Soon muſt this bough, as you ſhall fix his doom,
Adorn Philander's head, or grace his tomb.

"Why now, do but ſee how the world is gaping for a wonder! (cries Mr. Johnſon;) I think it is now juſt forty years ago that a young fellow had a ſprig of myrtle given him by a girl he courted, and aſked me to write him ſome verſes that he might preſent her in return. I promiſed, but forgot; and when he called for his lines at the time agreed on—Sit ſtill a moment (ſays I), dear Mund, and I'll fetch them thee—ſo ſtepped aſide for five minutes, and wrote the nonſenſe you now keep ſuch a ſtir about."

Upon reviſing theſe Anecdotes, it is impoſſible not to be ſtruck with ſhame and regret that one treaſured no more of them up; but no experience is ſufficient to cure the vice of negligence: whatever one ſees conſtantly, or might ſee conſtantly, becomes unintereſting; and we ſuffer every trivial occupation, every ſlight amuſement, to hinder us from writing down, what indeed we cannot

chuſe but remember; but what we ſhould wiſh to recollect with pleaſure, unpoiſoned by remorſe for not remembering more. While I write this, I neglect impreſſing my mind with the wonders of art, and beauties of nature, that now ſurround me; and ſhall one day, perhaps, think on the hours I might have profitably paſſed in the Florentine Gallery, and reflecting on Raphael's St. John at that time, as upon Johnſon's converſation in this moment, may juſtly exclaim of the months ſpent by me moſt delightfully in Italy——

That I priz'd every hour that paſs'd by,
Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;
But now they are paſt, and I ſigh,
And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

SHENSTONE.

Dr. Johnſon delighted in his own partiality for Oxford; and one day, at my houſe, entertained five members of the other univerſity with various inſtances of

the ſuperiority of Oxford, enumerating the gigantic names of many men whom it had produced, with apparent triumph. At laſt I ſaid to him, Why there happens to be no leſs than five Cambridge men in the room now. "I did not (ſaid he) think of that till you told me; but the wolf don't count the ſheep." When the company were retired, we happened to be talking of Dr. Barnard, the Provoſt of Eton, who died about that time; and after a long and juſt eulogium on his wit, his learning, and his goodneſs of heart: "He was the only man too (ſays Mr. Johnſon quite ſeriouſly) that did juſtice to my good breeding; and you may obſerve that I am well-bred to a degree of needleſs ſcrupuloſity. No man, (continued he, not obſerving the amazement of his hearers) no man is ſo cautious not to interrupt another; no man thinks it ſo neceſſary to appear attentive when others are ſpeaking; no man ſo ſteadily refuſes preference to him-

ſelf, or ſo willingly beſtows it on another, as I do; no body holds ſo ſtrongly as I do the neceſſity of ceremony, and the ill effects which follow the breach of it: yet people think me rude; but Barnard did me juſtice." 'Tis pity, ſaid I, laughing, that he had not heard you compliment the Cambridge men after dinner to-day. "Why (replied he) I was inclined to *down* them ſure enough; but then a fellow *deſerves* to be of Oxford that talks ſo." I have heard him at other times relate how he uſed to ſit in ſome coffee-houſe there, and turn M——'s C-r-ct-u-s into ridicule for the diverſion of himſelf and of chance comers-in. "The Elf—da (ſays he) was too exquiſitely pretty; I could make no fun out of that." When upon ſome occaſions he would expreſs his aſtoniſhment that he ſhould have an enemy in the world, while he had been doing nothing but good to his neighbours, I uſed to make him recollect theſe circumſtances: "Why

child (ſaid he), what harm could that do the fellow? I always thought very well of M——n for a *Cambridge* man; he is, I believe, a mighty blameleſs character." Such tricks were, however, the more unpardonable in Mr. Johnſon, becauſe no one could harangue like him about the difficulty always found in forgiving petty injuries, or in provoking by needleſs offence. Mr. Jordan, his tutor, had much of his affection, though he deſpiſed his want of ſcholaſtic learning. "That creature would (ſaid he) defend his pupils to the laſt: no young lad under his care ſhould ſuffer for committing ſlight improprieties, while he had breath to defend, or power to protect them. If I had had ſons to ſend to college (added he), Jordan ſhould have been their tutor."

Sir William Browne the phyſician, who lived to a very extraordinary age, and was in other reſpects an odd mortal,

with more genius than underſtanding, and more ſelf-ſufficiency than wit, was the only perſon who ventured to oppoſe Mr. Johnſon, when he had a mind to ſhine by exalting his favourite univerſity, and to expreſs his contempt of the whiggiſh notions which prevail at Cambridge. *He* did it once, however, with ſurpriſing felicity: his antagoniſt having repeated with an air of triumph the famous epigram written by Dr. Trapp,

Our royal maſter ſaw, with heedful eyes,
The wants of his two univerſities:
Troops he to Oxford ſent, as knowing why
That learned body wanted loyalty:
But books to Cambridge gave, as, well diſcerning,
That that right loyal body wanted learning.

Which, ſays Sir William, might well be anſwered thus:

The king to Oxford ſent his troop of horſe,
For Tories own no argument but force;
With equal care to Cambridge books he ſent,
For Whigs allow no force but argument.

Mr. Johnſon did him the juſtice to ſay, it was one of the happieſt extemporaneous productions he ever met with; though he once comically confeſſed, that he hated to repeat the wit of a whig urged in ſupport of whiggiſm. Says Garrick to him one day, Why did not you make me a tory, when we lived ſo much together, you love to make people tories? "Why (ſays Johnſon, pulling a heap of halfpence from his pocket) did not the king make theſe guineas?"

Of Mr. Johnſon's toryiſm the world has long been witneſs, and the political pamphlets written by him in defence of his party, are vigorous and elegant. He often delighted his imagination with the thoughts of having deſtroyed Junius, an anonymous writer who flouriſhed in the years 1769 and 1770, and who kept himſelf ſo ingeniouſly concealed from every endeavour to detect him, that no probable gueſs was, I believe, ever

formed concerning the author's name, though at that time the ſubject of general converſation. Mr. Johnſon made us all laugh one day, becauſe I had received a remarkably fine Stilton cheeſe as a preſent from ſome perſon who had packed and directed it carefully, but without mentioning whence it came. Mr. Thrale, deſirous to know who we were obliged to, aſked every friend as they came in, but no body owned it: "Depend upon it, Sir (ſays Johnſon), it was ſent by *Junius*."

The Falſe Alarm, his firſt and favourite pamphlet, was written at our houſe between eight o'clock on Wedneſday night and twelve o'clock on Thurſday night; we read it to Mr. Thrale when he came very late home from the Houſe of Commons: the other political tracts followed in their order. I have forgotten which contains the ſtroke at Junius; but ſhall for ever remember the pleaſure it gave

him to have written it. It was however in the year 1775 that Mr. Edmund Burke made the famous ſpeech in parliament, that ſtruck even foes with admiration, and friends with delight. Among the nameleſs thouſands who are contented to echo thoſe praiſes they have not ſkill to invent, *I* ventured, before Dr. Johnſon himſelf, to applaud, with rapture, the beautiful paſſage in it concerning Lord Bathurſt and the Angel; which, ſaid our Doctor, had I been in the houſe, I would have anſwered *thus:*

"Suppoſe, Mr. Speaker, that to Wharton, or to Marlborough, or to any of the eminent whigs of the laſt age, the devil had, not with any great impropriety, conſented to appear; he would perhaps in ſomewhat like theſe words have commenced the converſation:

"You ſeem, my Lord, to be concerned at the judicious apprehenſion, that while you are ſapping the foundations of

royalty at home, and propagating here the dangerous doctrine of reſiſtance; the diſtance of America may ſecure its inhabitants from your arts, though active: but I will unfold to you the gay proſpects of futurity. This people, now ſo innocent and harmleſs, ſhall draw the ſword againſt their mother country, and bathe its point in the blood of their benefactors: this people, now contented with a little, ſhall then refuſe to ſpare what they themſelves confeſs they could not miſs; and theſe men, now ſo honeſt and ſo grateful, ſhall, in return for peace and for protection, ſee their vile agents in the houſe of parliament, there to ſow the ſeeds of ſedition, and propagate confuſion, perplexity, and pain. Be not diſpirited then at the contemplation of their preſent happy ſtate: I promiſe you that anarchy, poverty, and death ſhall, by my care, be carried even acroſs the ſpacious Atlantic, and ſettle in America itſelf, the ſure conſequences of our beloved whiggiſm."

This I thought a thing ſo very particular, that I begged his leave to write it down directly, before any thing could intervene that might make me forget the force of the expreſſions: a trick, which I have however ſeen played on common occaſions, of ſitting ſteadily down at the other end of the room to write at the moment what ſhould be ſaid in company, either *by* Dr. Johnſon or *to* him, I never practiſed myſelf, nor approved of in another. There is ſomething ſo ill-bred, and ſo inclining to treachery in this conduct, that were it commonly adopted, all confidence would ſoon be exiled from ſociety, and a converſation aſſembly-room would become tremendous as a court of juſtice. A ſet of acquaintance joined in familiar chat may ſay a thouſand things, which (as the phraſe is) paſs well enough at the time, though they cannot ſtand the teſt of critical examination; and as all talk beyond that which is neceſſary to the

purpoſes of actual buſineſs is a kind of game, there will be ever found ways of playing fairly or unfairly at it, which diſtinguiſh the gentleman from the juggler. Dr. Johnſon, as well as many of my acquaintance, knew that I kept a common-place book; and he one day ſaid to me good-humouredly, that he would give me ſomething to write in my repoſitory. "I warrant (ſaid he) there is a great deal about me in it: you ſhall have at leaſt one thing worth your pains; ſo if you will get the pen and ink, I will repeat to you Anacreon's Dove directly; but tell at the ſame time, that as I never was ſtruck with any thing in the Greek language till I read *that*, ſo I never read any thing in the ſame language ſince, that pleaſed me as much. I hope my tranſlation (continued he) is not worſe than that of Frank Fawkes." Seeing me diſpoſed to laugh, "Nay, nay (ſaid he), Frank Fawkes has done them very finely."

LOVELY courier of the ſky,
Whence and whither doſt thou fly?
Scatt'ring, as thy pinions play,
Liquid fragrance all the way:
Is it buſineſs? is it love?
Tell me, tell me, gentle Dove.
" Soft Anacreon's vows I bear,
" Vows to Myrtale the fair;
" Grac'd with all that charms the heart,
" Bluſhing nature, ſmiling art.
" Venus, courted by an ode,
" On the bard her Dove beſtow'd.
" Veſted with a maſter's right
" Now Anacreon rules my flight:
" His the letters that you ſee,
" Weighty charge conſign'd to me:
" Think not yet my ſervice hard,
" Joyleſs taſk without reward:
" Smiling at my maſter's gates,
" Freedom my return awaits;
" But the liberal grant in vain
" Tempts me to be wild again:
" Can a prudent Dove decline
" Bliſsful bondage ſuch as mine?
" Over hills and fields to roam,
" Fortune's gueſt without a home;
" Under leaves to hide one's head,
" Slightly ſhelter'd, coarſely fed;

" Now my better lot beſtows
" Sweet repaſt, and ſoft repoſe;
" Now the generous bowl I ſip
" As it leaves Anacreon's lip;
" Void of care, and free from dread,
" From his fingers ſnatch his bread,
" Then with luſcious plenty gay,
" Round his chamber dance and play;
" Or from wine as courage ſprings,
" O'er his face extend my wings;
" And when feaſt and frolic tire,
" Drop aſleep upon his lyre.
" This is all, be quick and go,
" More than all thou canſt not know;
" Let me now my pinions ply,
" I have chatter'd like a pye."

When I had finiſhed, " But you muſt remember to add (ſays Mr. Johnſon) that though theſe verſes were planned, and even begun, when I was ſixteen years old, I never could find time to make an end of them before I was ſixty-eight."

This facility of writing, and this dilatorineſs ever to write, Mr. Johnſon always retained, from the days that he lay a-bed

and dictated his first publication to Mr. Hector, who acted as his amanuensis, to the moment he made me copy out those variations in Pope's Homer which are printed in the Poets Lives: "And now (said he, when I had finished it for him) I fear not Mr. Nichols of a pin."—The fine Rambler on the subject of Procrastination was hastily composed, as I have heard, in Sir Joshua Reynolds's parlour, while the boy waited to carry it to press: and numberless are the instances of his writing under immediate pressure of importunity or distress. He told me that the character of *Sober* in the Idler, was by himself intended as his own portrait; and that he had his own outset into life in his eye when he wrote the eastern story of Gelaleddin. Of the allegorical papers in the Rambler, Labour and Rest was his favourite; but Serotinus, the man who returns late in life to receive honours in his native country, and meets with mortification instead of respect, was

by him conſidered as a maſterpiece in the ſcience of life and manners. The character of Proſpero in the fourth volume, Garrick took to be his; and I have heard the author ſay, that he never forgave the offence. Sophron was likewiſe a picture drawn from reality; and by Gelidus the philoſopher, he meant to repreſent Mr. Coulſon, a mathematician, who formerly lived at Rocheſter. The man immortaliſed for purring like a cat was, as he told me, one Buſby, a proctor in the Commons. He who barked ſo ingeniouſly, and then called the drawer to drive away the dog, was father to Dr. Salter of the Charterhouſe. He who ſung a ſong, and by correſpondent motions of his arm chalked out a giant on the wall, was one Richardſon, an attorney. The letter ſigned Sunday, was written by Miſs Talbot; and he fancied the billets in the firſt volume of the Rambler, were ſent him by Miſs Mulſo, now Mrs. Chapone. The papers contributed by Mrs.

Carter, had much of his eſteem, though he always blamed me for preferring the letter ſigned Charieſſa to the allegory, where religion and ſuperſtition are indeed moſt maſterly delineated.

When Dr. Johnſon read his own ſatire, in which the life of a ſcholar is painted, with the various obſtructions thrown in his way to fortune and to fame, he burſt into a paſſion of tears one day: the family and Mr. Scott only were preſent, who, in a jocoſe way, clapped him on the back, and ſaid, What's all this, my dear Sir? Why you, and I, and *Hercules*, you know, were all troubled with *melancholy*. As there are many gentlemen of the ſame name, I ſhould ſay, perhaps, that it was a Mr. Scott who married Miſs Robinſon, and that I think I have heard Mr. Thrale call him George Lewis, or George Auguſtus, I have forgot which. He was a very large man, however, and made out the triumvirate

with Johnſon and Hercules comically enough. The Doctor was ſo delighted at his odd ſally, that he ſuddenly embraced him, and the ſubject was immediately changed. I never ſaw Mr. Scott but that once in my life.

Dr. Johnſon was liberal enough in granting literary aſſiſtance to others, I think; and innumerable are the prefaces, ſermons, lectures, and dedications which he uſed to make for people who begged of him. Mr. Murphy related in his and my hearing one day, and he did not deny it, that when Murphy joked him the week before for having been ſo diligent of late between Dodd's ſermon and Kelly's prologue, that Dr. Johnſon replied, "Why, Sir, when they come to me with a dead ſtay-maker and a dying parſon, what can a man do?" He *ſaid*, however, that "he hated to give away literary performances, or even to ſell them too cheaply: the next generation ſhall not

accuſe me (added he) of beating down the price of literature: one hates, beſides, ever to give that which one has been accuſtomed to ſell; would not you, Sir (turning to Mr. Thrale), rather give away money than porter?"

Mr. Johnſon had never, by his own account, been a cloſe ſtudent, and uſed to adviſe young people never to be without a book in their pocket, to be read at bye-times when they had nothing elſe to do. "It has been by that means (ſaid he to a boy at our houſe one day) that all my knowledge has been gained, except what I have picked up by running about the world with my wits ready to obſerve, and my tongue ready to talk. A man is ſeldom in a humour to unlock his book-caſe, ſet his deſk in order, and betake himſelf to ſerious ſtudy; but a retentive memory will do ſomething, and a fellow ſhall have ſtrange credit given him, if he can but recollect ſtriking

paſſages from different books, keep the authors ſeparate in his head, and bring his ſtock of knowledge artfully into play: How elſe (added he) do the gameſters manage when they play for more money than they are worth?" His Dictionary, however, could not, one would think, have been written by running up and down; but he really did not conſider it as a great performance; and uſed to ſay, "that he might have done it eaſily in two years, had not his health received ſeveral ſhocks during the time."

When Mr. Thrale, in conſequence of this declaration, teized him in the year 1768 to give a new edition of it, becauſe (ſaid he) there are four or five groſs faults: "Alas, Sir (replied Johnſon), there are four or five hundred faults, inſtead of four or five; but you do not conſider that it would take me up three whole months labour, and when the time was expired, the work would not be

done." When the bookſellers ſet him about it however ſome years after, he went cheerfully to the buſineſs, ſaid he was well paid, and that they deſerved to have it done carefully. His reply to the perſon who complimented him on its coming out firſt, mentioning the ill ſucceſs of the French in a ſimilar attempt, is well known; and, I truſt, has been often recorded: "Why, what would you expect, dear Sir (ſaid he), from fellows that eat frogs?" I have however often thought Dr. Johnſon more free than prudent in profeſſing ſo loudly his little ſkill in the Greek language: for though he conſidered it as a proof of a narrow mind to be too careful of literary reputation, yet no man could be more enraged than he, if an enemy, taking advantage of this confeſſion, twitted him with his ignorance; and I remember when the king of Denmark was in England, one of his noblemen was brought by Mr. Colman to ſee Dr. Johnſon at our country-houſe; and

having heard, he ſaid, that he was not famous for Greek literature, attacked him on the weak ſide; politely adding, that he choſe that converſation on purpoſe to favour himſelf. Our Doctor, however, diſplayed ſo copious, ſo compendious a knowledge of authors, books, and every branch of learning in that language, that the gentleman appeared aſtoniſhed. When he was gone home (ſays Johnſon), "Now for all this triumph, I may thank Thrale's Xenophon here, as, I think, excepting that *one*, I have not looked in a Greek book theſe ten years; but ſee what haſte my dear friends were all in (continued he) to tell this poor innocent foreigner that I knew nothing of Greek! Oh, no, he knows nothing of Greek!" with a loud burſt of laughing.

When Davies printed the Fugitive Pieces without his knowledge or conſent; How, ſaid I, would Pope have raved, had he been ſerved ſo? "We ſhould

never (replied he) have heard the laſt on't, to be ſure; but then Pope was a narrow man: I will however (added he) ſtorm and bluſter *myſelf* a little this time;"—ſo went to London in all the wrath he could muſter up. At his return I aſked how the affair ended: "Why (ſaid he), I was a fierce fellow, and pretended to be very angry, and Thomas was a good-natured fellow, and pretended to be very ſorry; ſo *there* the matter ended; I believe the dog loves me dearly. Mr. Thrale (turning to my huſband), what ſhall you and I do that is good for Tom Davies? We will do ſomething for him, to be ſure."

Of Pope as a writer he had the higheſt opinion, and once when a lady at our houſe talked of his preface to Shakeſpeare as ſuperior to Pope's: "I fear not, Madam (ſaid he), the little fellow has done wonders." His ſuperior reverence of Dryden notwithſtanding ſtill appeared

in his talk as in his writings; and when ſome one mentioned the ridicule thrown on him in the Rehearſal, as having hurt his general character as an author: "On the contrary (ſays Mr. Johnſon), the greatneſs of Dryden's reputation is now the only principle of vitality which keeps the duke of Buckingham's play from putrefaction."

It was not very eaſy however for people not quite intimate with Dr. Johnſon, to get exactly his opinion of a writer's merit, as he would now and then divert himſelf by confounding thoſe who thought themſelves obliged to ſay to-morrow what he had ſaid yeſterday; and even Garrick, who ought to have been better acquainted with his tricks, profeſſed himſelf mortified, that one time when he was extolling Dryden in a rapture that I ſuppoſe diſguſted his friend, Mr. Johnſon ſuddenly challenged him to produce twenty lines in a ſeries that would not

diſgrace the poet and his admirer. Garrick produced a paſſage that he had once heard the Doctor commend, in which he *now* found, if I remember rightly, ſixteen faults, and made Garrick look ſilly at his own table. When I told Mr. Johnſon the ſtory, "Why, what a monkey was David now (ſays he), to tell of his own diſgrace!" And in the courſe of that hour's chat he told me, how he uſed to teize Garrick by commendations of the tomb ſcene in Congreve's Mourning Bride, proteſting that Shakeſpeare had in the ſame line of excellence nothing as good: "All which is ſtrictly *true* (ſaid he); but that is no reaſon for ſuppoſing Congreve is to ſtand in competition with Shakeſpeare: theſe fellows know not how to blame, nor how to commend." I forced him one day, in a ſimilar humour, to prefer Young's deſcription of Night to the ſo much admired ones of Dryden and Shakeſpeare, as more forcible, and more

general. Every reader is not either a lover or a tyrant, but every reader is intereſted when he hears that

> Creation ſleeps; 'tis as the general pulſe
> Of life ſtood ſtill, and nature made a pauſe;
> An awful pauſe—prophetic of its end.

"This (ſaid he) is true; but remember that taking the compoſitions of Young in general, they are but like bright ſtepping-ſtones over a miry road: Young froths, and foams, and bubbles ſometimes very vigorouſly; but we muſt not compare the noiſe made by your tea-kettle here with the roaring of the ocean."

Somebody was praiſing Corneille one day in oppoſition to Shakeſpeare: "Corneille is to Shakeſpeare (replied Mr. Johnſon) as a clipped hedge is to a foreſt." When we talked of Steele's Eſſays, "They are too thin (ſays our Critic) for an Engliſhman's taſte:

mere ſuperficial obſervations on life and manners, without erudition enough to make them keep, like the light French wines, which turn ſour with ſtanding a while for want of *body*, as we call it."

Of a much admired poem, when extolled as beautiful (he replied), "That it had indeed the beauty of a bubble: the colours are gay (ſaid he), but the ſubſtance ſlight." Of James Harris's Dedication to his Hermes I have heard him obſerve, that, though but fourteen lines long, there were ſix grammatical faults in it. A friend was praiſing the ſtyle of Dr. Swift; Mr. Johnſon did not find himſelf in the humour to agree with him: the critic was driven from one of his performances to the other. At length you *muſt* allow me, ſaid the gentleman, that there are *ſtrong facts* in the account of the Four laſt Years of Queen Anne: "Yes ſurely Sir (replies John-

ſon), and ſo there are in the Ordinary of Newgate's account." This was like the ſtory which Mr. Murphy tells, and Johnſon always acknowledged: How Dr. Roſe of Chiſwick, contending for the preference of Scotch writers over the Engliſh, after having ſet up his authors like nine-pins, while the Doctor kept bowling them down again; at laſt, to make ſure of victory, he named Ferguſon upon Civil Society, and praiſed the book for being written in a *new* manner. "I do not (ſays Johnſon) perceive the value of this new manner; it is only like Buckinger, who had no hands, and ſo wrote with his feet." Of a modern Martial when it came out: "There are in theſe verſes (ſays Dr. Johnſon) too much folly for madneſs, I think, and too much madneſs for folly." If, however, Mr. Johnſon lamented, that the nearer he approached to his own times, the more enemies he ſhould make, by telling biographical truths in

his Lives of the later Poets, what may I not apprehend, who, if I relate anecdotes of Mr. Johnſon, am obliged to repeat expreſſions of ſeverity, and ſentences of contempt? Let me at leaſt ſoften them a little, by ſaying, that he did not hate the perſons he treated with roughneſs, or deſpiſe them whom he drove from him by apparent ſcorn. He really loved and reſpected many whom he would not ſuffer to love him. And when he related to me a ſhort dialogue that paſſed between himſelf and a writer of the firſt eminence in the world, when he was in Scotland, I was ſhocked to think how he muſt have diſguſted him. Dr. ——— aſked me (ſaid he) why I did not join in their public worſhip when among them? for (ſaid he) I went to your churches often when in England. "So (replied Johnſon) I have read that the Siameſe ſent ambaſſadors to Louis Quatorze, but I never heard that the king of France thought

it worth his while to ſend ambaſſadors from his court to that of *Siam*." He was no gentler with myſelf, or thoſe for whom I had the greateſt regard. When I one day lamented the loſs of a firſt couſin killed in America—"Prithee, my dear (ſaid he), have done with canting: how would the world be worſe for it, I may aſk, if all your relations were at once ſpitted like larks, and roaſted for Preſto's ſupper?" Preſto was the dog that lay under the table while we talked.—When we went into Wales together, and ſpent ſome time at Sir Robert Cotton's at Lleweny, one day at dinner I meant to pleaſe Mr. Johnſon particularly with a diſh of very young peas. Are not they charming? ſaid I to him, while he was eating them.—"Perhaps (ſaid he) they would be ſo—to a *pig*." I only inſtance theſe replies, to excuſe my mentioning thoſe he made to others.

When a well-known author publiſhed his poems in the year 1777: Such a one's verſes are come out, ſaid I: "Yes (replied Johnſon), and this froſt has ſtruck them in again. Here are ſome lines I have written to ridicule them: but remember that I love the fellow dearly, now—for all I laugh at him.

Whereſoe'er I turn my view,
All is ſtrange, yet nothing new:
Endleſs labour all along,
Endleſs labour to be wrong;
Phraſe that Time has flung away;
Uncouth words in diſarray,
Trick'd in antique ruff and bonnet,
Ode, and elegy, and ſonnet."

When he parodied the verſes of another eminent writer, it was done with more provocation, I believe, and with ſome merry malice. A ſerious tranſlation of the ſame lines, which I think are from Euripides, may be found in Burney's Hiſtory of Muſic.—Here are the burleſque ones:

Err ſhall they not, who reſolute explore
Times gloomy backward with judicious eyes;
And ſcanning right the practices of yore,
Shall deem our hoar progenitors unwiſe.

They to the dome where ſmoke with curling play
Announc'd the dinner to the regions round,
Summon'd the ſinger blythe, and harper gay,
And aided wine with dulcet-ſtreaming ſound.

The better uſe of notes, or ſweet or ſhrill,
By quiv'ring ſtring, or modulated wind;
Trumpet or lyre—to their harſh boſoms chill,
Admiſſion ne'er had ſought, or could not find.

Oh! ſend them to the ſullen manſions dun,
Her baleful eyes where Sorrow rolls around;
Where gloom-enamour'd Miſchief loves to dwell,
And Murder, all blood-bolter'd, ſchemes the wound.

When cates luxuriant pile the ſpacious diſh,
And purple nectar glads the feſtive hour;
The gueſt, without a want, without a wiſh,
Can yield no room to Muſic's ſoothing pow'r.

Some of the old lengendary ſtories put in verſe by modern writers provoked him to caricature them thus one day at Streatham; but they are already well-known, I am ſure.

The tender infant, meek and mild,
Fell down upon the ſtone;
The nurſe took up the ſquealing child,
But ſtill the child ſqueal'd on.

A famous ballad alſo, beginning *Rio verde, Rio verde*, when I commended the tranſlation of it, he ſaid he could do it better himſelf—as thus:

Glaſſy water, glaſſy water,
Down whoſe current clear and ſtrong,
Chiefs confus'd in mutual ſlaughter,
Moor and Chriſtian roll along.

But Sir, ſaid I, this is not ridiculous at all. "Why no (replied he), why ſhould I always write ridiculouſly?—perhaps becauſe I made theſe verſes to imitate ſuch a one, naming him:

Hermit hoar, in ſolemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray;
Strike thy boſom ſage! and tell,
What is bliſs, and which the way?
Thus I ſpoke, and ſpeaking ſigh'd,
Scarce repreſs'd the ſtarting tear,
When the hoary Sage reply'd,
Come, my lad, and drink ſome beer."

I could give another comical inſtance of caricatura imitation. Recollecting ſome day, when praiſing theſe verſes of Lopez de Vega,

Se a quien los leones vence
Vence una muger hermoſa
O el de flaco averguençe
O ella di ſer mas furioſa,

more than he thought they deſerved, Mr. Johnſon inſtantly obſerved, "that they were founded on a trivial conceit; and that conceit ill-explained, and ill-expreſſed beſide.——The lady, we all know, does not conquer in the ſame manner as the lion does: 'Tis a mere play of words (added he), and you might as well ſay, that

If the man who turnips cries,
Cry not when his father dies,
'Tis a proof that he had rather
Have a turnip than his father.

And this humour is of the ſame ſort with which he anſwered the friend

who commended the following line:

Who rules o'er freemen ſhould himſelf be free.

"To be ſure (ſaid Dr. Johnſon),

Who drives fat oxen ſhould himſelf be fat."

This readineſs of finding a parallel, or making one, was ſhewn by him perpetually in the courſe of converſation.—When the French verſes of a certain pantomime were quoted thus,

Je ſuis Caſſandre deſcendüe des cieux,
Pour vous fair entendre, meſdames et meſſieurs,
Que je ſuis Caſſandre deſcendüe des cieux;

he cried out gaily and ſuddenly, almoſt in a moment,

"I am Caſſandra come down from the ſky,
To tell each by-ſtander what none can deny,
That I am Caſſandra come down from the ſky."

The pretty Italian verſes too, at the end of Baretti's book, called "Eaſy Phraſeology," he did *all' improviſo*, in the ſame manner:

Viva! viva la padrona!
Tutta bella, e tutta buona,
La padrona è un angiolella
Tutta buona e tutta bella;
Tutta bella e tutta buona;
Viva! viva la padrona!

Long may live my lovely Hetty!
Always young and always pretty,
Always pretty, always young,
Live my lovely Hetty long!
Always young and always pretty;
Long may live my lovely Hetty!

The famous diſtich too, of an Italian *improviſatore*, who, when the duke of Modena ran away from the comet in the year 1742 or 1743,

Se al venir veſtro i principi ſen' vanno
Deh venga ogni di —— durate un anno;

" which (ſaid he) would do juſt as well in our language thus:

If at your coming princes diſappear,
Comets! come every day—and ſtay a year."

When ſome one in company commended the verſes of M. de Benſerade *à ſon Lit*;

Théatre des ris et des pleurs,
Lit! où je nais, et où je meurs,
Tu nous fais voir comment voiſins,
Sont nos plaiſirs, et nos chagrins.

To which he replied without heſitating,

"In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
And born in bed, in bed we die;
The near approach a bed may ſhew,
Of human bliſs to human woe."

The inſcription on the collar of Sir Joſeph Banks's goat which had been on two of his adventurous expeditions with him, and was then, by the humanity of her amiable maſter, turned out to graze in Kent, as a recompence for her utility and faithful ſervice, was given me by Johnſon in the year 1777 I think, and I have never yet ſeen it printed.

Perpetui, ambitâ bis terrâ, premia lactis,
Hæc habet altrici Capra ſecunda Jovis.

The epigram written at Lord Anſon's houſe many years ago, "where (ſays Mr. Johnſon) I was well received and kindly treated, and with the true gratitude of a wit ridiculed the maſter of the houſe before I had left it an hour," has been falſely printed in many papers ſince his death. I wrote it down from his own lips one evening in Auguſt 1772, not neglecting the little preface, accuſing himſelf of making ſo graceleſs a return for the civilities ſhewn him. He had, among other elegancies about the park and gardens, been made to obſerve a temple to the winds, when this thought naturally preſented itſelf *to a wit.*

Gratum animum laudo; Qui debuit omnia ventis,
Quam bene ventorum, ſurgere templa jubet!

A tranſlation of Dryden's epigram too, I uſed to fancy I had to myſelf.

Quos laudet vates, Graius, Romanus, et Anglus,
Tres tria temporibus ſecla dedere ſuis:
Sublime ingenium Graius,—Romanus habebat
Carmen grande ſonans, Anglus utrumque tulit.
Nil majus natura capit; clarare priores
Quæ potuere duos, tertius unus habet:

from the famous lines written under Milton's picture:

Three poets in three diſtant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;
The firſt in loftineſs of thought ſurpaſt,
The next in majeſty; in both the laſt.
The force of Nature could no further go;
To make a third ſhe join'd the former two.

One evening in the oratorio ſeaſon of the year 1771, Mr. Johnſon went with me to Covent-Garden theatre; and though he was for the moſt part an exceedingly bad playhouſe companion, as his perſon drew people's eyes upon the box, and the loudneſs of his voice made it difficult for me to hear any body but himſelf; he ſat ſurpriſingly quiet, and I flattered myſelf that he was liſtening

to the muſic. When we were got home however he repeated theſe verſes, which he ſaid he had made at the oratorio, and he bid me tranſlate them.

IN THEATRO.

Tertii verſo quater orbe luſtri
Quid theatrales tibi Criſpe pompæ!
Quam decet canos male literatos
Sera voluptas!

Tene mulceri fidibus canoris?
Tene cantorum modulis ſtupere?
Tene per pictas oculo elegante
Currere formas?

Inter equales ſine felle liber,
Codices veri ſtudioſus inter
Rectius vives, ſua quiſque carpat
Gaudia gratus.

Luſibus gaudet puer otioſis
Luxus oblectat juvenem theatri,
At ſeni fluxo ſapienter uti
Tempora reſtat.

I gave him the following lines in imitation, which he liked well enough, I think:

When threeſcore years have chill'd thee quite,
Still can theatric ſcenes delight?
Ill ſuits this place with learned wight,
May Bates or Coulſon cry.

The ſcholar's pride can Brent diſarm?
His heart can ſoft Guadagni warm?
Or ſcenes with ſweet deluſion charm
The climacteric eye?

The ſocial club, the lonely tower,
Far better ſuit thy midnight hour;
Let each according to his power
In worth or wiſdom ſhine!

And while play pleaſes idle boys,
And wanton mirth fond youth employs,
To fix the ſoul, and free from toys,
That uſeful taſk be thine.

The copy of verſes in Latin hexameters, as well as I remember, which he wrote to Dr. Lawrence, I forgot to keep a copy of; and he obliged me to reſign

his tranſlation of the ſong beginning, *Buſy, curious, thirſty fly*, for him to give Mr. Langton, with a promiſe *not* to retain a copy. I concluded he knew why, ſo never enquired the reaſon. He had the greateſt poſſible value for Mr. Langton, of whoſe virtue and learning he delighted to talk in very exalted terms; and poor Dr. Lawrence had long been his friend and confident. The converſation I ſaw them hold together in Eſſex-ſtreet one day in the year 1781 or 1782, was a melancholy one, and made a ſingular impreſſion on my mind. He was himſelf exceedingly ill, and I accompanied him thither for advice. The phyſician was however, in ſome reſpects, more to be pitied than the patient: Johnſon was panting under an aſthma and dropſy; but Lawrence had been brought home that very morning ſtruck with the palſy, from which he had, two hours before we came, ſtrove to awaken

himſelf by bliſters: they were both deaf, and ſcarce able to ſpeak beſides; one from difficulty of breathing, the other from paralytic debility. To give and receive medical counſel therefore, they fairly ſate down on each ſide a table in the Doctor's gloomy apartment, adorned with ſkeletons, preſerved monſters, &c. and agreed to write Latin billets to each other: ſuch a ſcene did I never ſee! "You (ſaid Johnſon) are *timidè* and *gelidè*;" finding that his friend had preſcribed palliative not draſtic remedies. It is not *me*, replies poor Lawrence in an interrupted voice; 'tis nature that is *gelidè* and *timidè*. In fact he lived but few months after I believe, and retained his faculties ſtill a ſhorter time. He was a man of ſtrict piety and profound learning, but little ſkilled in the knowledge of life or manners, and died without having ever enjoyed the reputation he ſo juſtly deſerved.

Mr. Johnſon's health had been always extremely bad ſince I firſt knew him, and his over-anxious care to retain without blemiſh the perfect ſanity of his mind, contributed much to diſturb it. He had ſtudied medicine diligently in all its branches; but had given particular attention to the diſeaſes of the imagination, which he watched in himſelf with a ſolicitude deſtructive of his own peace, and intolerable to thoſe he truſted. Dr. Lawrence told him one day, that if he would come and beat him once a week he would bear it; but to hear his complaints was more than *man* could ſupport. 'Twas therefore that he tried, I ſuppoſe, and in eighteen years contrived to weary the patience of a *woman*. When Mr. Johnſon felt his fancy, or fancied he felt it, diſordered, his conſtant recurrence was to the ſtudy of arithmetic; and one day that he was totally confined to his chamber, and I enquired what he had been doing to

divert himſelf; he ſhewed me a calculation which I could ſcarce be made to underſtand, ſo vaſt was the plan of it, and ſo very intricate were the figures: no other indeed than that the national debt, computing it at one hundred and eighty millions ſterling, would, if converted into ſilver, ſerve to make a meridian of that metal, I forget how broad, for the globe of the whole earth, the real *globe*. On a ſimilar occaſion I aſked him (knowing what ſubject he would like beſt to talk upon), How his opinion ſtood towards the queſtion between Paſchal and Soame Jennings about number and numeration? as the French philoſopher obſerves that infinity, though on all ſides aſtoniſhing, appears moſt ſo when the idea is connected with the idea of number; for the notions of infinite number, and infinite number we know there is, ſtretches one's capacity ſtill more than the idea of infinite ſpace; "Such a notion indeed (adds he) can ſcarcely

find room in the human mind." Our Engliſh author on the other hand exclaims, let no man give himſelf leave to talk about infinite number, for infinite number is a contradiction in terms; whatever is once numbered, we all ſee cannot be infinite. "I think (ſaid Mr. Johnſon after a pauſe) we muſt ſettle the matter thus: numeration is certainly infinite, for eternity might be employed in adding unit to unit; but every number is in itſelf finite, as the poſſibility of doubling it eaſily proves: beſides, ſtop at what point you will, you find yourſelf as far from infinitude as ever." Theſe paſſages I wrote down as ſoon as I had heard them, and repent that I did not take the ſame method with a diſſertation he made one other day that he was very ill, concerning the peculiar properties of the number Sixteen, which I afterwards tried, but in vain, to make him repeat.

As ethics or figures, or metaphyſical reaſoning, was the ſort of talk he moſt delighted in, ſo no kind of converſation pleaſed him leſs I think, than when the ſubject was hiſtorical fact or general polity. "What ſhall we learn from *that* ſtuff (ſaid he)? let us not fancy like Swift that we are exalting a woman's character by telling how ſhe

Could name the ancient heroes round,
Explain for what they were renown'd, &c."

I muſt not however lead my readers to ſuppoſe that he meant to reſerve ſuch talk for *men*'s company as a proof of pre-eminence. "He never (as he expreſſed it) deſired to hear of the *Punic war* while he lived: ſuch converſation was loſt time (he ſaid), and carried one away from common life, leaving no ideas behind which could ſerve *living wight* as warning or direction."

How I ſhould act is not the caſe,
But how would Brutus in my place?

"And now (cries Mr. Johnſon, laughing with obſtreperous violence), if theſe two fooliſh lines can be equalled in folly, except by the two ſucceeding ones—ſhew them me."

I aſked him once concerning the converſation powers of a gentleman with whom I was myſelf unacquainted—"He talked to me at club one day (replies our Doctor) concerning Catiline's conſpiracy—ſo I withdrew my attention, and thought about Tom Thumb."

Modern politics fared no better. I was one time extolling the character of a ſtateſman, and expatiating on the ſkill required to direct the different currents, reconcile the jarring intereſts, &c. "Thus (replies he) a mill is a complicated piece of mechaniſm enough, but the water is no part of the workmanſhip."——On another occaſion, when ſome one lamented the weakneſs of a

then preſent miniſter, and complained that he was dull and tardy, and knew little of affairs,—"You may as well complain, Sir (ſays Johnſon), that the accounts of time are kept by the clock; for he certainly does ſtand ſtill upon the ſtair-head—and we all know that he is no great chronologer."——In the year 1777, or thereabouts, when all the talk was of an invaſion, he ſaid moſt pathetically one afternoon, "Alas! alas! how this unmeaning ſtuff ſpoils all my comfort in my friends converſation! Will the people never have done with it; and ſhall I never hear a ſentence again without the *French* in it? Here is no invaſion coming, and you *know* there is none. Let the vexatious and frivolous talk alone, or ſuffer it at leaſt to teach you *one* truth; and learn by this perpetual echo of even unapprehended diſtreſs, how hiſtorians magnify events expected, or calamities endured; when you know they are at this very mo-

ment collecting all the big words they can find, in which to deſcribe a conſternation never felt, for a misfortune which never happened. Among all your lamentations, who eats the leſs? Who ſleeps the worſe, for one general's ill ſucceſs, or another's capitulation? *Oh, pray* let us hear no more of it!"——No man however was more zealouſly attached to his party; he not only loved a tory himſelf, but he loved a man the better if he heard he hated a whig. "Dear Bathurſt (ſaid he to me one day) was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a *whig*; he was a very good *hater*."

Some one mentioned a gentleman of that party for having behaved oddly on an occaſion where faction was not concerned:—"Is he not a citizen of London, a native of North America, and a whig? (ſays Johnſon)—Let him be

abſurd, I beg of you: when a monkey is *too* like a man, it ſhocks one."

Severity towards the poor was, in Dr. Johnſon's opinion (as is viſible in his Life of Addiſon particularly), an undoubted and conſtant attendant or conſequence upon whiggiſm; and he was not contented with giving them relief, he wiſhed to added alſo indulgence. He loved the poor as I never yet ſaw any one elſe do, with an earneſt deſire to make them happy.—What ſignifies, ſays ſome one, giving halfpence to common beggars? they only lay it out in gin or tobacco. "And why ſhould they be denied ſuch ſweeteners of their exiſtence (ſays Johnſon)? it is ſurely very ſavage to refuſe them every poſſible avenue to pleaſure, reckoned too coarſe for our own acceptance. Life is a pill which none of us can bear to ſwallow without gilding; yet for the poor we delight in

ſtripping it ſtill barer, and are not aſhamed to ſhew even viſible diſpleaſure, if ever the bitter taſte is taken from their mouths." In conſequence of theſe principles he nurſed whole neſts of people in his houſe, where the lame, the blind, the ſick, and the ſorrowful found a ſure retreat from all the evils whence his little income could ſecure them: and commonly ſpending the middle of the week at our houſe, he kept his numerous family in Fleet-ſtreet upon a ſettled allowance; but returned to them every Saturday, to give them three good dinners, and his company, before he came back to us on the Monday night——treating them with the ſame, or perhaps more ceremonious civility, than he would have done by as many people of faſhion——making the holy ſcriptures thus the rule of his conduct, and only expecting ſalvation as he was able to obey its precepts.

While Dr. Johnſon poſſeſſed however the ſtrongeſt compaſſion for poverty or illneſs, he did not even pretend to feel for thoſe who lamented the loſs of a child, a parent, or a friend.—— "Theſe are the diſtreſſes of ſentiment (he would reply) which a man who is really to be pitied has no leiſure to feel. The ſight of people who want food and raiment is ſo common in great cities, that a ſurly fellow like me, has no compaſſion to ſpare for wounds given only to vanity or ſoftneſs." No man, therefore, who ſmarted from the ingratitude of his friends, found any ſympathy from our philoſopher: "Let him do good on higher motives next time," would be the anſwer; "he will then be ſure of his reward."——It is eaſy to obſerve, that the juſtice of ſuch ſentences made them offenſive; but we muſt be careful how we condemn a man for ſaying what we know to be true, only

becauſe it *is* ſo. I hope that the reaſon our hearts rebelled a little againſt his ſeverity, was chiefly becauſe it came from a living mouth.—Books were invented to take off the odium of immediate ſuperiority, and ſoften the rigour of duties preſcribed by the teachers and cenſors of human kind—ſetting at leaſt thoſe who are acknowledged wiſer than ourſelves at a diſtance. When we recollect however, that for this very reaſon *they* are ſeldom conſulted and little obeyed, how much cauſe ſhall his contemporaries have to rejoice that their living Johnſon forced them to feel the reproofs due to vice and folly—while Seneca and Tillotſon were no longer able to make impreſſion—except on our ſhelves. Few things indeed which paſs well enough with others would do with him: he had been a great reader of Mandeville, and was ever on the watch to ſpy out thoſe ſtains of original corruption, ſo eaſily diſcovered by a penetrating obſerver

even in the pureſt minds. I mentioned an event, which if it had happened would greatly have injured Mr. Thrale and his family——and then, dear Sir, ſaid I, how ſorry you would have been! "I *hope* (replied he after a long pauſe) —I ſhould have been *very* ſorry;—— but remember Rochefoucault's maxim." ——I would rather (anſwered I) remember Prior's verſes, and aſk,

> What need of books theſe truths to tell,
> Which folks perceive that cannot ſpell?
> And muſt we ſpectacles apply,
> To ſee what hurts our naked eye?

Will *any* body's mind bear this eternal microſcope that you place upon your own ſo? "I never (replied he) ſaw one that *would*, except that of my dear Miſs Reynolds—and her's is very near to purity itſelf."——Of ſlighter evils, and friends leſs diſtant than our own houſehold, he ſpoke leſs cautiouſly. An acquaintance loſt the almoſt certain hope of a good eſtate that had been long

expected. Such a one will grieve (ſaid I) at her friend's diſappointment. "She will ſuffer as much perhaps (ſaid he) as your horſe did when your cow miſcarried." —— I profeſſed myſelf ſincerely grieved when accumulated diſtreſſes cruſhed Sir George Colebrook's family; and I was ſo. "Your own proſperity (ſaid he) may poſſibly have ſo far increaſed the natural tenderneſs of your heart, that for aught I know you *may* be a *little ſorry*; but it is ſufficient for a plain man if he does not laugh when he ſees a fine new houſe tumble down all on a ſudden, and a ſnug cottage ſtand by ready to receive the owner, whoſe birth entitled him to nothing better, and whoſe limbs are left him to go to work again with."

I uſed to tell him in jeſt, that his morality was eaſily contented; and when I have ſaid ſomething as if the wickedneſs of the world gave me concern, he

would cry out aloud againſt canting, and proteſt that he thought there was very little groſs wickedneſs in the world, and ſtill leſs of extraordinary virtue. Nothing indeed more ſurely diſguſted Dr. Johnſon than hyperbole; he loved not to be told of ſallies of excellence, which he ſaid were ſeldom valuable, and ſeldom true. "Heroic virtues (ſaid he) are the *bons mots* of life; they do not appear often, and when they do appear are too much prized I think; like the aloe-tree, which ſhoots and flowers once in a hundred years. But life is made up of little things; and that character is the beſt which does little but repeated acts of beneficence; as that converſation is the beſt which conſiſts in elegant and pleaſing thoughts expreſſed in natural and pleaſing terms. With regard to my own notions of moral virtue (continued he), I hope I have not loſt my ſenſibility of wrong; but I hope likewiſe that I have lived long enough

in the world, to prevent me from expecting to find any action of which both the original motive and all the parts were good."

The piety of Dr. Johnſon was exemplary and edifying: he was punctiliouſly exact to perform every public duty enjoined by the church, and his ſpirit of devotion had an energy that affected all who ever ſaw him pray in private. The coldeſt and moſt languid hearers of the word muſt have felt themſelves animated by his manner of reading the holy ſcriptures; and to pray by his ſick bed, required ſtrength of body as well as of mind, ſo vehement were his manners, and his tones of voice ſo pathetic. I have many times made it my requeſt to heaven that I might be ſpared the ſight of his death; and I was ſpared it!

Mr. Johnſon, though in general a groſs feeder, kept faſt in Lent, particu-

larly the holy week, with a rigour very dangerous to his general health; but though he had left off wine (for religious motives as I always believed, though he did not own it), yet he did not hold the commutation of offences by voluntary penance, or encourage others to practiſe ſeverity upon themſelves. He even once ſaid, "that he thought it an error to endeavour at pleaſing God by taking the rod of reproof out of his hands." And when we talked of convents, and the hardſhips ſuffered in them—"Remember always (ſaid he) that a convent is an idle place, and where there is nothing to be *done* ſomething muſt be *endured:* muſtard has a bad taſte *per ſe* you may obſerve, but very inſipid food cannot be eaten without it."

His reſpect however for places of religious retirement was carried to the greateſt degree of earthly veneration: the Benedictine convent at Paris paid

him all poſſible honours in return, and the Prior and he parted with tears of tenderneſs. Two of that college being ſent to England on the miſſion ſome years after, ſpent much of their time with him at Bolt Court I know, and he was ever earneſt to retain their friendſhip; but though beloved by all his Roman Catholic acquaintance, particularly Dr. Nugent, for whoſe eſteem he had a ſingular value, yet was Mr. Johnſon a moſt unſhaken church of England man; and I think, or at leaſt I once *did* think, that a letter written by him to Mr. Barnard the King's librarian, when he was in Italy collecting books, contained ſome very particular advice to his friend to be on his guard againſt the ſeductions of the church of Rome.

The ſettled averſion Dr. Johnſon felt towards an infidel he expreſſed to all ranks, and at all times, without the ſmalleſt reſerve; for though on common

occaſions he paid great deference to birth or title, yet his regard for truth and virtue never gave way to meaner conſiderations. We talked of a dead wit one evening, and ſomebody praiſed him—"Let us never praiſe talents ſo ill employed, Sir; we foul our mouths by commending ſuch infidels (ſaid he)." Allow him the *lumières* at leaſt, intreated one of the company—"I do allow him, Sir (replied Johnſon), juſt enough to light him to hell."——Of a Jamaica gentleman, then lately dead—"He will not, whither he is now gone (ſaid Johnſon), find much difference, I believe, either in the climate or the company."——The Abbé Reynal probably remembers that, being at the houſe of a common friend in London, the maſter of it approached Johnſon with that gentleman ſo much celebrated in his hand, and this ſpeech in his mouth: Will you permit me, Sir, to preſent to you the Abbé Reynal? "*No, Sir,*" (replied the Doctor very

loud) and ſuddenly turned away from them both.

Though Mr. Johnſon had but little reverence either for talents or fortune, when he found them unſupported by virtue; yet it was ſufficient to tell him a man was very pious, or very charitable, and he would at leaſt *begin* with him on good terms, however the converſation might end. He would, ſometimes too, good-naturedly enter into a long chat for the inſtruction or entertainment of people he deſpiſed. I perfectly recollect his condeſcending to delight my daughter's dancing-maſter with a long argument about *his* art; which the man proteſted, at the cloſe of the diſcourſe, the Doctor knew more of than himſelf; who remained aſtoniſhed, enlightened, and amuſed by the talk of a perſon little likely to make a good diſquiſition upon dancing. I have ſometimes indeed been rather pleaſed than vexed when Mr.

Johnſon has given a rough anſwer to a man who perhaps deſerved one only half as rough, becauſe I knew he would repent of his haſty reproof, and make us all amends by ſome converſation at once inſtructive and entertaining, as in the following caſes: A young fellow aſked him abruptly one day, Pray, Sir, what and where is Palmira? I heard ſomebody talk laſt night of the ruins of Palmira. "'Tis a hill in Ireland (replies Johnſon), with palms growing on the top, and a bog at the bottom, and ſo they call it *Palm-mira*." Seeing however that the lad thought him ſerious, and thanked him for the information, he undeceived him very gently indeed; told him the hiſtory, geography, and chronology of Tadmor in the wilderneſs, with every incident that literature could furniſh I think, or eloquence expreſs, from the building of Solomon's palace to the voyage of Dawkins and Wood.

On another occaſion, when he was muſing over the fire in our drawing-room at Streatham, a young gentleman called to him ſuddenly, and I ſuppoſe he thought diſreſpectfully, in theſe words: Mr. Johnſon, Would you adviſe me to marry? "I would adviſe no man to marry, Sir (returns for anſwer in a very angry tone Dr. Johnſon), who is not likely to propagate underſtanding;" and ſo left the room. Our companion looked confounded, and I believe had ſcarce recovered the conſciouſneſs of his own exiſtence, when Johnſon came back, and drawing his chair among us, with altered looks and a ſoftened voice, joined in the general chat, inſenſibly led the converſation to the ſubject of marriage, where he laid himſelf out in a diſſertation ſo uſeful, ſo elegant, ſo founded on the true knowledge of human life, and ſo adorned with beauty of ſentiment, that no one ever recollected the offence, except to rejoice in its conſequences.

He repented juſt as certainly however, if he had been led to praiſe any perſon or thing by accident more than he thought it deſerved; and was on ſuch occaſions comically earneſt to deſtroy the praiſe or pleaſure he had unintentionally given.

Sir Joſhua Reynolds mentioned ſome picture as excellent. "It has often grieved me, Sir (ſaid Mr. Johnſon), to ſee ſo much mind as the ſcience of painting requires, laid out upon ſuch periſhable materials: why do not you oftener make uſe of copper? I could wiſh your ſuperiority in the art you profeſs, to be preſerved in ſtuff more durable than canvas." Sir Joſhua urged the difficulty of procuring a plate large enough for hiſtorical ſubjects, and was going to raiſe further objections: "What foppiſh obſtacles are theſe! (exclaims on a ſudden Dr. Johnſon:) Here is Thrale has a thouſand tun of copper; you may paint it all round if

you will, I ſuppoſe; it will ſerve him to brew in afterwards: Will it not, Sir?" (to my huſband who ſat by.) Indeed Dr. Johnſon's utter ſcorn of painting was ſuch, that I have heard him ſay, that he ſhould ſit very quietly in a room hung round with the works of the greateſt maſters, and never feel the ſlighteſt diſpoſition to turn them if their backs were outermoſt, unleſs it might be for the ſake of telling Sir Joſhua that he *had* turned them. Such ſpeeches may appear offenſive to many, but thoſe who knew he was too blind to diſcern the perfections of an art which applies itſelf immediately to our eye-ſight, muſt acknowledge he was not in the wrong.

He delighted no more in muſic than painting; he was almoſt as deaf as he was blind: travelling with Dr. Johnſon was for theſe reaſons tireſome enough. Mr. Thrale loved proſpects, and was mortified that his friend could not enjoy

the ſight of thoſe different diſpoſitions of wood and water, hill and valley, that travelling through England and France affords a man. But when he wiſhed to point them out to his companion: "Never heed ſuch nonſenſe," would be the reply: "a blade of graſs is always a blade of graſs, whether in one country or another: let us if we *do* talk, talk about ſomething; men and women are my ſubjects of enquiry; let us ſee how theſe differ from thoſe we have left behind."

When we were at Rouen together, he took a great fancy to the Abbé Roffette, with whom he converſed about the deſtruction of the order of Jeſuits, and condemned it loudly, as a blow to the general power of the church, and likely to be followed with many and dangerous innovations, which might at length become fatal to religion itſelf, and ſhake even the foundation of Chriſtianity. The gentleman ſeemed to wonder and de-

light in his converſation: the talk was all in Latin, which both ſpoke fluently, and Mr. Johnſon pronounced a long eulogium upon Milton with ſo much ardour, eloquence, and ingenuity, that the Abbé roſe from his ſeat and embraced him. My huſband ſeeing them apparently ſo charmed with the company of each other, politely invited the Abbé to England, intending to oblige his friend; who, inſtead of thanking, reprimanded him ſeverely before the man, for ſuch a ſudden burſt of tenderneſs towards a perſon he could know nothing at all of; and thus put a ſudden finiſh to all his own and Mr. Thrale's entertainment from the company of the Abbé Roffette.

When at Verſailles the people ſhewed us the theatre. As we ſtood on the ſtage looking at ſome machinery for playhouſe purpoſes: Now we are here, what ſhall we act, Mr. Johnſon,—The Engliſhman at Paris? "No, no (replied he), we will

try to act Harry the Fifth." His diſlike of the French was well known to both nations, I believe; but he applauded the number of their books and the graces of their ſtyle. "They have few ſentiments (ſaid he), but they expreſs them neatly; they have little meat too, but they dreſs it well." Johnſon's own notions about eating however were nothing leſs than delicate; a leg of pork boiled till it dropped from the bone, a veal-pye with plums and ſugar, or the outſide cut of a ſalt buttock of beef, were his favourite dainties: with regard to drink, his liking was for the ſtrongeſt, as it was not the flavour, but the effect he ſought for, and profeſſed to deſire; and when I firſt knew him, he uſed to pour capillaire into his Port wine. For the laſt twelve years however, he left off all fermented liquors. To make himſelf ſome amends indeed, he took his chocolate liberally, pouring in large quantities of cream, or even melted butter; and was ſo fond of fruit, that though he uſually eat ſeven

or eight large peaches of a morning before breakfaſt began, and treated them with proportionate attention after dinner again, yet I have heard him proteſt that he never had quite as much as he wiſhed of wall-fruit, except once in his life, and that was when we were all together at Ombersley, the ſeat of my Lord Sandys. I was ſaying to a friend one day, that I did not like gooſe; one ſmells it ſo while it is roaſting, ſaid I: "But you, Madam (replies the Doctor), have been at all times a fortunate woman, having always had your hunger ſo foreſtalled by indulgence, that you never experienced the delight of ſmelling your dinner beforehand." Which pleaſure, anſwered I pertly, is to be enjoyed in perfection by ſuch as have the happineſs to paſs through Porridge-Iſland * of a

* Porridge-Iſland is a mean ſtreet in London, filled with cook-ſhops for the convenience of the poorer inhabitants; the real name of it I know not, but ſuſpect that it is generally known by, to have been originally a term of deriſion.

morning. "Come, come (ſays he gravely), let's have no ſneering at what is ſerious to ſo many: hundreds of your fellow-creatures, dear Lady, turn another way, that they may not be tempted by the luxuries of Porridge-Iſland to wiſh for gratifications they are not able to obtain: you are certainly not better than all of *them*; give God thanks that you are happier."

I received on another occaſion as juſt a rebuke from Mr. Johnſon, for an offence of the ſame nature, and hope I took care never to provoke a third; for after a very long ſummer particularly hot and dry, I was wiſhing naturally but thoughtleſsly for ſome rain to lay the duſt as we drove along the Surry roads. "I cannot bear (replied he, with much aſperity and an altered look), when I know how many poor families will periſh next winter for want of that bread which the preſent drought will deny them, to

hear ladies ſighing for rain, only that their complexions may not ſuffer from the heat, or their clothes be incommoded by the duſt;—for ſhame! leave off ſuch foppiſh lamentations, and ſtudy to relieve thoſe whoſe diſtreſſes are real."

With adviſing others to be charitable however, Dr. Johnſon did not content himſelf. He gave away all he had, and all he ever had gotten, except the two thouſand pounds he left behind; and the very ſmall portion of his income which he ſpent on himſelf, with all our calculation, we never could make more than ſeventy, or at moſt fourſcore pounds a year, and he pretended to allow himſelf a hundred. He had numberleſs dependents out of doors as well as in, "who, as he expreſſed it, did not like to ſee him latterly unleſs he brought 'em money." For thoſe people he uſed frequently to raiſe contributions on his richer friends; "and this (ſays he) is

one of the thouſand reaſons which ought to reſtrain a man from drony ſolitude and uſeleſs retirement. Solitude (added he one day) is dangerous to reaſon, without being favourable to virtue: pleaſures of ſome ſort are neceſſary to the intellectual as to the corporeal health; and thoſe who reſiſt gaiety, will be likely for the moſt part to fall a ſacrifice to appetite; for the ſolicitations of ſenſe are always at hand, and a dram to a vacant and ſolitary perſon is a ſpeedy and ſeducing relief. Remember (continued he) that the ſolitary mortal is certainly luxurious, probably ſuperſtitious, and poſſibly mad: the mind ſtagnates for want of employment, grows morbid, and is extinguiſhed like a candle in foul air." It was on this principle that Johnſon encouraged parents to carry their daughters early and much into company: "for what harm can be done before ſo many witneſſes? Solitude is the ſureſt nurſe of all prurient paſſions,

and a girl in the hurry of preparation, or tumult of gaiety, has neither inclination nor leiſure to let tender expreſſions ſoften or ſink into her heart. The ball, the ſhow, are not the dangerous places: no, 'tis the private friend, the kind conſoler, the companion of the eaſy vacant hour, whoſe compliance with her opinions can flatter her vanity, and whoſe converſation can juſt ſooth, without ever ſtretching her mind, that is the lover to be feared: he who buzzes in her ear at court, or at the opera, muſt be contented to buzz in vain." Theſe notions Dr. Johnſon carried ſo very far, that I have heard him ſay, "if you would ſhut up any man with any woman, ſo as to make them derive their whole pleaſure from each other, they would inevitably fall in love, as it is called, with each other; but at ſix months end if you would throw them both into public life where they might change partners at pleaſure, each would ſoon forget that fondneſs

which mutual dependance, and the paucity of general amuſement alone, had cauſed, and each would ſeparately feel delighted by their releaſe."

In theſe opinions Rouſſeau apparently concurs with him exactly; and Mr. Whitehead's poem called *Variety*, is written ſolely to elucidate this ſimple propoſition. Prior likewiſe adviſes the huſband to ſend his wife abroad, and let her ſee the world as it really ſtands ——

Powder, and pocket-glaſs, and beau.

Mr. Johnſon was indeed unjuſtly ſuppoſed to be a lover of ſingularity. Few people had a more ſettled reverence for the world than he, or was leſs captivated by new modes of behaviour introduced, or innovations on the long-received cuſtoms of common life. He hated the way of leaving a company without taking notice to the lady of the

houſe that he was going; and did not much like any of the contrivances by which eaſe has been lately introduced into ſociety inſtead of ceremony, which had more of his approbation. Cards, dreſs, and dancing however, all found their advocates in Dr. Johnſon, who inculcated, upon principle, the cultivation of thoſe arts, which many a moraliſt thinks himſelf bound to reject, and many a Chriſtian holds unfit to be practiſed. "No perſon (ſaid he one day) goes under-dreſſed till he thinks himſelf of conſequence enough to forbear carrying the badge of his rank upon his back." And in anſwer to the arguments urged by Puritans, Quakers, &c. againſt ſhowy decorations of the human figure, I once heard him exclaim, "Oh, let us not be found when our Maſter calls us, ripping the lace off our waiſtcoats, but the ſpirit of contention from our ſouls and tongues! Let us all conform in outward cuſtoms, which are of

no conſequence, to the manners of thoſe whom we live among, and deſpiſe ſuch paltry diſtinctions. Alas, Sir (continued he), a man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat, will not find his way thither the ſooner in a grey one." On an occaſion of leſs conſequence, when he turned his back on Lord Bolingbroke in the rooms at Brighthelmſtone, he made this excuſe: "I am not obliged, Sir (ſaid he to Mr. Thrale, who ſtood fretting), to find reaſons for reſpecting the rank of him who will not condeſcend to declare it by his dreſs or ſome other viſible mark: what are ſtars and other ſigns of ſuperiority made for?"

The next evening however he made us comical amends, by ſitting by the ſame nobleman, and haranguing very loudly about the nature and uſe and abuſe of divorces. Many people gathered round them to hear what was

ſaid, and when my huſband called him away, and told him to whom he had been talking—received an anſwer which I will not write down.

Though no man perhaps made ſuch rough replies as Dr. Johnſon, yet nobody had a more juſt averſion to general ſatire; he always hated and cenſured Swift for his unprovoked bitterneſs againſt the profeſſors of medicine; and uſed to challenge his friends, when they lamented the exorbitancy of phyſicians fees, to produce him one inſtance of an eſtate raiſed by phyſic in England. When an acquaintance too was one day exclaiming againſt the tedioufneſs of the law and its partiality; "Let us hear, Sir (ſaid Johnſon), no general abuſe; the law is the laſt reſult of human wiſdom acting upon human experience for the benefit of the public."

As the mind of Dr. Johnſon was greatly expanded, ſo his firſt care was

for general, not particular or petty morality; and thoſe teachers had more of his blame than praiſe, I think, who ſeek to oppreſs life with unneceſſary ſcruples: "Scruples would (as he obſerved) certainly make men miſerable, and ſeldom make them good. Let us ever (he ſaid) ſtudiouſly fly from thoſe inſtructors againſt whom our Saviour denounces heavy judgments, for having bound up burdens grievous to be borne, and laid them on the ſhoulders of mortal men." No one had however higher notions of the hard taſk of true Chriſtianity than Johnſon, whoſe daily terror leſt he had not done enough, originated in piety, but ended in little leſs than diſeaſe. Reaſonable with regard to others, he had formed vain hopes of performing impoſſibilities himſelf; and finding his good works ever below his deſires and intent, filled his imagination with fears that he ſhould never obtain forgiveneſs for omiſſions of duty and criminal waſte

of time. Theſe ideas kept him in conſtant anxiety concerning his ſalvation; and the vehement petitions he perpetually made for a longer continuance on earth, were doubtleſs the cauſe of his ſo prolonged exiſtence; for when I carried Dr. Pepys to him in the year 1782, it appeared wholly impoſſible for any ſkill of the phyſician or any ſtrength of the patient to ſave him. He was ſaved that time however by Sir Lucas's preſcriptions; and leſs ſkill on one ſide, or leſs ſtrength on the other, I am morally certain, would not have been enough. He had however poſſeſſed an athletic conſtitution, as he ſaid the man who dipped people in the ſea at Brighthelmſtone acknowledged; for ſeeing Mr. Johnſon ſwim in the year 1766, Why Sir (ſays the dipper), you muſt have been a ſtout-hearted gentleman forty years ago.

Mr. Thrale and he uſed to laugh about that ſtory very often: but Gar-

rick told a better, for he ſaid that in their young days, when ſome ſtrolling players came to Litchfield, our friend had fixed his place upon the ſtage, and got himſelf a chair accordingly; which leaving for a few minutes, he found a man in it at his return, who refuſed to give it back at the firſt intreaty: Mr. Johnſon however, who did not think it worth his while to make a ſecond, took chair and man and all together, and threw them all at once into the pit. I aſked the Doctor if this was a fact? "Garrick has not *ſpoiled* it in the telling (ſaid he), it is very *near* true to be ſure."

Mr. Beauclerc too related one day, how on ſome occaſion he ordered two large maſtiffs into his parlour, to ſhew a friend who was converſant in canine beauty and excellence, how the dogs quarrelled, and faſtening on each other, alarmed all the company except Johnſon,

who ſeizing one in one hand by the cuff of the neck, the other in the other hand, ſaid gravely, "Come, gentlemen! where's your difficulty? put one dog out at the door, and I will ſhew this fierce gentleman the way out of the window:" which, lifting up the maſtiff and the ſaſh, he contrived to do very expeditiouſly, and much to the ſatisfaction of the affrighted company. We inquired as to the truth of this curious recital. "The dogs have been ſomewhat magnified, I believe Sir (was the reply): they were, as I remember, two ſtout young pointers; but the ſtory has gained but little."

One reaſon why Mr. Johnſon's memory was ſo particularly exact, might be derived from his rigid attention to veracity; being always reſolved to relate every fact as it ſtood, he looked even on the ſmaller parts of life with minute attention, and remembered ſuch paſſages

as eſcape curſory and common obſervers. "A ſtory (ſays he) is a ſpecimen of human manners, and derives its ſole value from its truth. When Foote has told me ſomething, I diſmiſs it from my mind like a paſſing ſhadow: when Reynolds tells me ſomething, I conſider myſelf as poſſeſſed of an idea the more."

Mr. Johnſon liked a frolic or a jeſt well enough; though he had ſtrange ſerious rules about it too: and very angry was he if any body offered to be merry when he was diſpoſed to be grave. "You have an ill-founded notion (ſaid he) that it is clever to turn matters off with a joke (as the phraſe is); whereas nothing produces enmity ſo certain, as one perſon's ſhewing a diſpoſition to be merry when another is inclined to be either ſerious or diſpleaſed."

One may gather from this how he felt, when his Iriſh friend Grierſon, hearing

him enumerate the qualities neceſſary to the formation of a poet, began a comical parody upon his ornamented harangue in praiſe of a cook, concluding with this obſervation, that he who dreſſed a good dinner was a more excellent and a more uſeful member of ſociety than he who wrote a good poem. "And in this opinion (ſaid Mr. Johnſon in reply) all the dogs in the town will join you."

Of this Mr. Grierſon I have heard him relate many droll ſtories, much to his advantage as a wit, together with ſome facts more difficult to be accounted for; as avarice never was reckoned among the vices of the laughing world. But Johnſon's various life, and ſpirit of vigilance to learn and treaſure up every peculiarity of manner, ſentiment, or general conduct, made his company, when he choſe to relate anecdotes of people he had formerly known, exquiſitely amuſing and comical. It is indeed in-

conceivable what ſtrange occurrences he had ſeen, and what ſurpriſing things he could tell when in a communicative humour. It is by no means my buſineſs to relate memoirs of his acquaintance; but it will ſerve to ſhew the character of Johnſon himſelf, when I inform thoſe who never knew him, that no man told a ſtory with ſo good a grace, or knew ſo well what would make an effect upon his auditors. When he raiſed contributions for ſome diſtreſſed author, or wit in want, he often made us all more than amends by diverting deſcriptions of the lives they were then paſſing in corners unſeen by any body but himſelf and that odd old ſurgeon whom he kept in his houſe to tend the out-penſioners, and of whom he ſaid moſt truly and ſublimely, that

In miſery's darkeſt caverns known,
His uſeful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeleſs anguiſh pours her groan,
And lonely want retires to die.

I have forgotten the year, but it could ſcarcely I think be later than 1765 or 1766, that he was called abruptly from our houſe after dinner, and returning in about three hours, ſaid, he had been with an enraged author, whoſe landlady preſſed him for payment within doors, while the bailiffs beſet him without; that he was drinking himſelf drunk with Madeira to drown care, and fretting over a novel which when finiſhed was to be his whole fortune; but he could not get it done for diſtraction, nor could he ſtep out of doors to offer it to ſale. Mr. Johnſon therefore ſet away the bottle, and went to the bookſeller, recommending the performance, and deſiring ſome immediate relief; which when he brought back to the writer, he called the woman of the houſe directly to partake of punch, and paſs their time in merriment.

It was not till ten years after, I dare ſay, that ſomething in Dr. Goldſmith's behaviour ſtruck me with an idea that he was the very man, and then Johnſon confeſſed that he was ſo; the novel was the charming Vicar of Wakefield.

There was a Mr. Boyce too, who wrote ſome very elegant verſes printed in the Magazines of five-and-twenty years ago, of whoſe ingenuity and diſtreſs I have heard Dr. Johnſon tell ſome curious anecdotes; particularly, that when he was almoſt periſhing with hunger, and ſome money was produced to purchaſe him a dinner, he got a bit of roaſt beef, but could not eat it without ketchup, and laid out the laſt half-guinea he poſſeſſed in truffles and muſhrooms, eating them in bed too, for want of clothes, or even a ſhirt to ſit up in.

Another man for whom he often begged, made as wild uſe of his friend's be-

neficence as theſe, ſpending in punch the ſolitary guinea which had been brought him one morning; when reſolving to add another claimant to a ſhare of the bowl, beſides a woman who always lived with him, and a footman who uſed to carry out petitions for charity, he borrowed a chairman's watch, and pawning it for half a crown, paid a clergyman to marry him to a fellow-lodger in the wretched houſe they all inhabited, and got ſo drunk over the guinea bowl of punch the evening of his wedding-day, that having many years loſt the uſe of one leg, he now contrived to fall from the top of the ſtairs to the bottom, and break his arm, in which condition his companions left him to call Mr. Johnſon, who relating the ſeries of his tragi-comical diſtreſſes, obtained from the Literary Club a ſeaſonable relief.

Of that reſpectable ſociety I have heard him ſpeak in the higheſt terms, and

with a magnificent panegyric on each member, when it conſiſted only of a dozen or fourteen friends; but as ſoon as the neceſſity of enlarging it brought in new faces, and took off from his confidence in the company, he grew leſs fond of the meeting, and loudly proclaimed his careleſſneſs *who* might be admitted, when it was become a mere dinner club. I *think* the original names, when I firſt heard him talk with fervor of every member's peculiar powers of inſtructing or delighting mankind, were Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Burke, Mr. Langton, Mr. Beauclerc, Dr. Percy, Dr. Nugent, Dr. Goldſmith, Sir Robert Chambers, Mr. Dyer, and Sir Joſhua Reynolds, whom he called their Romulus, or ſaid ſomebody elſe of the company called him ſo, which was more likely: but this was, I believe, in the year 1775 or 1776. It was a ſupper meeting then, and I fancy Dr. Nugent ordered an omelet ſometimes on a Fri-

day or Saturday night; for I remember Mr. Johnſon felt very painful ſenſations at the ſight of that diſh ſoon after his death, and cried, "Ah, my poor dear friend! I ſhall never eat omelet with *thee* again!" quite in an agony. The truth is, nobody ſuffered more from pungent ſorrow at a friend's death than Johnſon, though he would ſuffer no one elſe to complain of their loſſes in the ſame way; "for (ſays he) we muſt either outlive our friends you know, or our friends muſt outlive us; and I ſee no man that would heſitate about the choice."

Mr. Johnſon loved late hours extremely, or more properly hated early ones. Nothing was more terrifying to him than the idea of retiring to bed, which he never would call going to reſt, or ſuffer another to call ſo. "I lie down (ſaid he) that my acquaintance may ſleep; but I lie down to endure oppreſſive miſery, and ſoon riſe again to

paſs the night in anxiety and pain." By this pathetic manner, which no one ever poſſeſſed in ſo eminent a degree, he uſed to ſhock me from quitting his company, till I hurt my own health not a little by ſitting up with him when I was myſelf far from well: nor was it an eaſy matter to oblige him even by compliance, for he always maintained that no one forbore their own gratifications for the ſake of pleaſing another, and if one *did* ſit up it was probably to amuſe one's ſelf. Some right however he certainly had to ſay ſo, as he made his company exceedingly entertaining when he had once forced one, by his vehement lamentations and piercing reproofs, not to quit the room, but to ſit quietly and make tea for him, as I often did in London till four o'clock in the morning. At Streatham indeed I managed better, having always ſome friend who was kind enough to engage him in talk, and favour my retreat.

The firſt time I every ſaw this extraordinary man was in the year 1764, when Mr. Murphy, who had been long the friend and confidential intimate of Mr. Thrale, perſuaded him to wiſh for Johnſon's converſation, extolling it in terms which that of no other perſon could have deſerved, till we were only in doubt how to obtain his company, and find an excuſe for the invitation. The celebrity of Mr. Woodhouſe a ſhoemaker, whoſe verſes were at that time the ſubject of common diſcourſe, ſoon afforded a pretence, and Mr. Murphy brought Johnſon to meet him, giving me general cautions not to be ſurpriſed at his figure, dreſs, or behaviour. What I recollect beſt of the day's talk, was his earneſtly recommending Addiſon's works to Mr. Woodhouſe as a model for imitation. "Give nights and days, Sir (ſaid he), to the ſtudy of Addiſon, if you mean either to be a good writer, or what is more worth, an honeſt man." When I ſaw ſomething like the ſame

expreſſion in his criticiſm on that author, lately publiſhed, I put him in mind of his paſt injunctions to the young poet, to which he replied, "That he wiſhed the ſhoemaker might have remembered them as well." Mr. Johnſon liked his new acquaintance ſo much however, that from that time he dined with us every Thurſday through the winter, and in the autumn of the next year he followed us to Brighthelmſtone, whence we were gone before his arrival; ſo he was diſappointed and enraged, and wrote us a letter expreſſive of anger, which we were very deſirous to pacify, and to obtain his company again if poſſible. Mr. Murphy brought him back to us again very kindly, and from that time his viſits grew more frequent, till in the year 1766 his health, which he had always complained of, grew ſo exceedingly bad, that he could not ſtir out of his room in the court he inhabited for many *weeks* together, I think *months*.

Mr. Thrale's attentions and my own now became ſo acceptable to him, that he often lamented to us the horrible condition of his mind, which he ſaid was nearly diſtracted; and though he charged *us* to make him odd ſolemn promiſes of ſecrecy on ſo ſtrange a ſubject, yet when we waited on him one morning, and heard him, in the moſt pathetic terms, beg the prayers of Dr. Delap, who had left him as we came in, I felt exceſſively affected with grief, and well remember my huſband involuntarily lifted up one hand to ſhut his mouth, from provocation at hearing a man ſo wildly proclaim what he could at laſt perſuade no one to believe; and what, if true, would have been ſo very unfit to reveal.

Mr. Thrale went away ſoon after, leaving me with him, and bidding me prevail on him to quit his cloſe habitation in the court and come with us to Streatham, where I undertook the care

of his health, and had the honour and happineſs of contributing to its reſtoration. This taſk, though diſtreſſing enough ſometimes, would have been leſs ſo had not my mother and he diſliked one another extremely, and teized me often with perverſe oppoſition, petty contentions, and mutual complaints. Her ſuperfluous attention to ſuch accounts of the foreign politics as are tranſmitted to us by the daily prints, and her willingneſs to talk on ſubjects he could not endure, began the averſion; and when, by the peculiarity of his ſtyle, ſhe found out that he teized her by writing in the newſpapers concerning battles and plots which had no exiſtence, only to feed her with new accounts of the diviſion of Poland perhaps, or the diſputes between the ſtates of Ruſſia and Turkey, ſhe was exceedingly angry to be ſure, and ſcarcely I think forgave the offence till the domeſtic diſtreſſes of the year 1772 reconciled them to and taught

them the true value of each other; excellent as *they both* were, far beyond the excellence of any other man and woman I ever yet ſaw. As her conduct too extorted his trueſt eſteem, her cruel illneſs excited all his tenderneſs; nor was the ſight of beauty, ſcarce to be ſubdued by diſeaſe, and wit, flaſhing through the apprehenſion of evil, a ſcene which Dr. Johnſon could ſee without ſenſibility. He acknowledged himſelf improved by her piety, and aſtoniſhed at her fortitude, and hung over her bed with the affection of a parent, and the reverence of a ſon. Nor did it give me leſs pleaſure to ſee her ſweet mind cleared of all its latent prejudices, and left at liberty to admire and applaud that force of thought and verſatility of genius, that comprehenſive ſoul and benevolent heart which attracted and commanded veneration from all, but inſpired peculiar ſenſations of delight mixed with reverence in thoſe who, like her, had the opportunity to

obſerve theſe qualities, ſtimulated by gratitude, and actuated by friendſhip. When Mr. Thrale's perplexities diſturbed his peace, dear Dr. Johnſon left him ſcarce a moment, and tried every artifice to amuſe as well as every argument to conſole him: nor is it more poſſible to deſcribe than to forget his prudent, his pious attentions towards the man who had ſome years before certainly ſaved his valuable life, perhaps his reaſon, by half obliging him to change the foul air of Fleet-ſtreet for the wholeſome breezes of the Suſſex Downs.

The epitaph engraved on my mother's monument ſhews how deſerving ſhe was of general applauſe. I aſked Johnſon why he named her perſon before her mind: he ſaid it was, "becauſe every body could judge of the one, and but few of the other."

Juxta ſepulta eſt HESTERA MARIA
Thomæ Cotton de Combermere baronetti Ceſtrienſis filia,
Johannis Saluſbury armigeri Flintienſis uxor.
Forma felix, felix ingenio;
Omnibus jucunda, ſuorum amantiſſima.
Linguis artibuſque ita exculta
Ut loquenti nunquam deeſſent
Sermonis nitor, ſententiarum floſculi,
Sapientiæ gravitas, leporum gratia:
Modum ſervandi adeo perita,
Ut domeſtica inter negotia literis oblectaretur.
Literarum inter delicias, rem familiarem ſedulo curaret,
Multis illi multos annos precantibus
diri carcinomatis veneno contabuit,
nexibuſque vitæ paulatim reſolutis,
é terris—meliora ſperans—emigravit.
Nata 1707. *Nupta* 1739. *Obiit* 1773.

Mr. Murphy, who admired her talents and delighted in her company, did me the favour to paraphraſe this elegant inſcription in verſes which I fancy have never yet been publiſhed. His fame has long been out of my power to increaſe as a poet; as a man of ſenſibility perhaps theſe lines may ſet him higher than he now ſtands. I remember with gratitude

the friendly tears which prevented him from ſpeaking as he put them into my hand.

Near this place
Are depoſited the remains of
HESTER MARIA,
The daughter of Sir Thomas Cotton of Combermere, in the county of Cheſhire, Bart. the wife of
John Saluſbury,
of the county of Flint, Eſquire. She was born in the year 1707, married in 1739, and died in 1773.

A pleaſing form, where every grace combin'd,
With genius bleſt, a pure enlighten'd mind;
Benevolence on all that ſmiles beſtow'd,
A heart that for her friends with love o'erflow'd:
In language ſkill'd, by ſcience form'd to pleaſe,
Her mirth was wit, her gravity was eaſe.
Graceful in all, the happy mien ſhe knew,
Which even to virtue gives the limits due;
Whate'er employ'd her, that ſhe ſeem'd to chuſe,
Her houſe, her friends, her buſineſs, or the muſe.
Admir'd and lov'd, the theme of general praiſe,
All to ſuch virtue wiſh'd a length of days;
But ſad reverſe! with ſlow-conſuming pains,
Th' envenom'd cancer revell'd in her veins;
Prey'd on her ſpirits—ſtole each power away;
Gradual ſhe ſunk, yet ſmiling in decay;
She ſmil'd in hope, by ſore afflictions try'd,
And in that hope the pious Chriſtian died.

The following epitaph on Mr. Thrale, who has now a monument cloſe by her's in Streatham church, I have ſeen printed and commended in Maty's Review for April 1784; and a friend has favoured me with a tranſlation.

Hic conditur quod reliquum eſt
HENRICI THRALE,
Qui res ſeu civiles, ſeu domeſticas, ita egit,
Ut vitam illi longiorem multi optarent;
Ita ſacras,
Ut quam brevem eſſet habiturus præſcire videretur;
Simplex, apertus, ſibique ſemper ſimilis,
Nihil oſtentavit aut arte fictum aut cura
Elaboratum.
In ſenatu, regi patriæque
Fideliter ſtuduit;
Vulgi obſtrepentis contemptor animoſus,
Domi inter mille mercaturæ negotia
Literarum elegantiam minimè neglexit.
Amicis quocunque modo laborantibus,
Conciliis, auctoritate, muneribus adfuit.
Inter familiares, comites, convivas, hoſpites,
Tam facili fuit morum ſuavitate
Ut omnium animos ad ſe alliceret;
Tam felici ſermonis libertate
Ut nulli adulatus, omnibus placeret.
Natus 1724. *Ob.* 1781.

Conſortes tumuli habet Rodolphum patrem, ſtrenuum
fortemque virum, et Henricum filium unicum,
quem ſpei parentum mors inopina decennem
præripuit.
Ita
Domus felix et opulenta, quam erexit
Avus, auxitque pater, cum nepote decidit.
Abi viator!
Et vicibus rerum humanarum perſpectis,
Æternitatem cogita!

Here are depoſited the remains of
HENRY THRALE,
Who managed all his concerns in the preſent world, public and private, in ſuch a manner as to leave many wiſhing he had continued longer in it;
And all that related to a future world, as if he had been ſenſible how ſhort a time he was to continue in this.
Simple, open, and uniform in his manners, his conduct was without either art or affectation.
In the ſenate ſteadily attentive to the true intereſts of his king and country,
He looked down with contempt on the clamours of the multitude:
Though engaged in a very extenſive buſineſs, He found ſome time to apply to polite literature:
And was ever ready to aſſiſt his friends labouring under any difficulties, with his advice, his influence, and his purſe.

To his friends, acquaintance, and gueſts,
he behaved with ſuch ſweetneſs of manners
as to attach them all to his perſon:
So happy in his converſation with them,
as to pleaſe all, though he flattered none.
He was born in the year 1724, and died in 1781.
In the ſame tomb lie interred his father
Ralph Thrale, a man of vigour and activity,
And his only ſon Henry, who died before his father,
Aged ten years.
Thus a happy and opulent family,
Raiſed by the grandfather, and augmented by the
father, became extinguiſhed with the grandſon.
Go, Reader,
And reflecting on the viciſſitudes of
all human affairs,
Meditate on eternity.

I never recollect to have heard that Dr. Johnſon wrote inſcriptions for any ſepulchral ſtones, except Dr. Goldſmith's in Weſtminſter abbey, and theſe two in Streatham church. He made four lines once, on the death of poor Hogarth, which were equally true and pleaſing: I know not why Garrick's were preferred to them.

The hand of him here torpid lies,
That drew th' eſſential form of grace;
Here clos'd in death th' attentive eyes,
That ſaw the manners in the face.

Mr. Hogarth, among the variety of kindneſſes ſhewn to me when I was too young to have a proper ſenſe of them, was uſed to be very earneſt that I ſhould obtain the acquaintance, and if poſſible the friendſhip of Dr. Johnſon, whoſe converſation was to the talk of other men, like Titian's painting compared to Hudſon's, he ſaid: but don't you tell people now, that I ſay ſo (continued he), for the connoiſſeurs and I are at war you know; and becauſe I hate *them*, they think I hate *Titian*—and let them!——Many were indeed the lectures I uſed to have in my very early days from dear Mr. Hogarth, whoſe regard for my father induced him perhaps to take notice of his little girl, and give her ſome odd particular directions about dreſs, dancing, and many other matters

intereſting now only becauſe they were his. As he made all his talents, however, ſubſervient to the great purpoſes of morality, and the earneſt deſire he had to mend mankind, his diſcourſe commonly ended in an ethical diſſertation, and a ſerious charge to me, never to forget his picture of the *Lady's laſt Stake*. Of Dr. Johnſon, when my father and he were talking together about him one day: That man (ſays Hogarth) is not contented with believing the Bible, but he fairly reſolves, I think, to believe nothing *but* the Bible. Johnſon (added he), though ſo wiſe a fellow, is more like king David than king Solomon; for he ſays in his haſte that all men are liars. This charge, as I afterwards came to know, was but too well founded: Mr. Johnſon's incredulity amounted almoſt to diſeaſe, and I have ſeen it mortify his companions exceedingly. But the truth is, Mr. Thrale had a very powerful influence over the

Doctor, and could make him ſuppreſs many rough anſwers: he could likewiſe prevail on him to change his ſhirt, his coat, or his plate, almoſt before it came indiſpenſably neceſſary to the comfortable feelings of his friends: But as I never had any aſcendency at all over Mr. Johnſon, except juſt in the things that concerned his health, it grew extremely perplexing and difficult to live in the houſe with him when the maſter of it was no more; the worſe indeed, becauſe his diſlikes grew capricious; and he could ſcarce bear to have any body come to the houſe whom it was abſolutely neceſſary for me to ſee. Two gentlemen, I perfectly well remember, dining with us at Streatham in the Summer 1782, when Elliot's brave defence of Gibraltar was a ſubject of common diſcourſe, one of theſe men naturally enough begun ſome talk about red-hot balls thrown with ſurprizing dexterity and effect: which Dr. Johnſon having

liſtened ſome time to, "I would adviſe you, Sir (ſaid he with a cold ſneer), never to relate this ſtory again: you really can ſcarce imagine how *very poor* a figure you make in the telling of it." Our gueſt being bred a Quaker, and I believe a man of an extremely gentle diſpoſition, needed no more reproofs for the ſame folly; ſo if he ever did ſpeak again, it was in a low voice to the friend who came with him. The check was given before dinner, and after coffee I left the room. When in the evening however our companions were returned to London, and Mr. Johnſon and myſelf were left alone, with only our uſual family about us, "I did not quarrel with thoſe Quaker fellows," (ſaid he, very ſeriouſly.) You did perfectly right, replied I; for they gave you no cauſe of offence. "No offence! (returned he with an altered voice;) and is it nothing then to ſit whiſpering together when *I* am preſent, without ever

directing their diſcourſe towards me, or offering me a ſhare in the converſation?" That was, becauſe you frighted him who ſpoke firſt about thoſe hot balls. "Why, Madam, if a creature is neither capable of giving dignity to falſehood, nor willing to remain contented with the truth, he deſerves no better treatment."

Mr. Johnſon's fixed incredulity of every thing he heard, and his little care to conceal that incredulity, was teizing enough to be ſure: and I ſaw Mr. Sharp was pained exceedingly, when relating the hiſtory of a hurricane that happened about that time in the Weſt Indies, where, for aught I know, he had himſelf loſt ſome friends too, he obſerved Dr. Johnſon believed not a ſyllable of the account: "For 'tis *ſo* eaſy (ſays he) for a man to fill his mouth with a wonder, and run about telling the lie before it can be detected, that I have no heart to believe hurricanes eaſily raiſed by the

firſt inventor, and blown forwards by thouſands more." I aſked him once if he believed the ſtory of the deſtruction of Liſbon by an earthquake when it firſt happened: "Oh! not for ſix months (ſaid he) at leaſt: I *did* think that ſtory too dreadful to be credited, and can hardly yet perſuade myſelf that it was true to the full extent we all of us have heard."

Among the numberleſs people however whom I heard him groſsly and flatly contradict, I never yet ſaw any one who did not take it patiently excepting Dr. Burney, from whoſe habitual ſoftneſs of manners I little expected ſuch an exertion of ſpirit: the event was as little to be expected. Mr. Johnſon aſked his pardon generouſly and genteelly, and when he left the room roſe up to ſhake hands with him, that they might part in peace. On another occaſion, when he had violently provoked Mr. Pepys, in a different but perhaps not a leſs offenſive

manner, till ſomething much too like a quarrel was grown up between them, the moment he was gone, "Now (ſays Dr. Johnſon) is Pepys gone home hating me, who love him better than I did before: he ſpoke in defence of his dead friend; but though I hope *I* ſpoke better who ſpoke againſt him, yet all my eloquence will gain me nothing but an honeſt man for my enemy!" He did not however cordially love Mr. Pepys, though he reſpected his abilities. "I knew the dog was a ſcholar (ſaid he, when they had been diſputing about the claſſics for three hours together one morning at Streatham); but that he had ſo much taſte and ſo much knowledge I did *not* believe: I might have taken Barnard's word though, for Barnard would not lie."

We had got a little French print among us at Brighthelmſtone, in November 1782, of ſome people ſkaiting, with theſe lines written under:

Sur un mince chryſtal l'hyver conduit leurs pas,
Le precipice eſt ſous la glace;
Telle eſt de nos plaiſirs la legere ſurface,
Gliſſez mortels; n'appuyez pas.

And I begged tranſlations from every body: Dr. Johnſon gave me this;

O'er ice the rapid ſkaiter flies,
With ſport above and death below;
Where miſchief lurks in gay diſguiſe,
Thus lightly touch and quickly go.

He was however moſt exceedingly enraged when he knew that in the courſe of the ſeaſon I had aſked half a dozen acquaintance to do the ſame thing, and ſaid, it was a piece of treachery, and done to make every body elſe look little when compared to my favourite friends the *Pepyſes*, whoſe tranſlations were unqueſtionably the beſt. I will inſert them, becauſe he *did* ſay ſo. This is the diſtich given me by Sir Lucas, to whom I owe more ſolid obligations, no leſs than the power of thanking him for

the life he ſaved, and whoſe leaſt valuable praiſe is the correctneſs of his taſte:

O'er the ice as o'er pleaſure you lightly ſhould glide;
Both have gulphs which their flattering ſurfaces hide.

This other more ſerious one was written by his brother:

Swift o'er the level how the ſkaiters ſlide,
And ſkim the glitt'ring ſurface as they go:
Thus o'er life's ſpecious pleaſures lightly glide,
But pauſe not, preſs not on the gulph below.

Dr. Johnſon ſeeing this laſt, and thinking a moment, repeated,

O'er crackling ice, o'er gulphs profound,
With nimble glide the ſkaiters play;
O'er treacherous pleaſure's flow'ry ground
Thus lightly ſkim, and haſte away.

Though thus uncommonly ready both to give and take offence, Mr. Johnſon had many rigid maxims concerning the neceſſity of continued ſoftneſs and compliance of diſpoſition: and when I once

mentioned Shenſtone's idea, that ſome little quarrel among lovers, relations, and friends was uſeful, and contributed to their general happineſs upon the whole, by making the ſoul feel her elaſtic force, and return to the beloved object with renewed delight:—"Why, what a pernicious maxim is this now (cries Johnſon), *all* quarrels ought to be avoided ſtudiouſly, particularly conjugal ones, as no one can poſſibly tell where they may end; beſides that laſting diſlike is often the conſequence of occaſional diſguſt, and that the cup of life is ſurely bitter enough, without ſqueezing in the hateful rind of reſentment." It was upon ſomething like the ſame principle, and from his general hatred of refinement, that when I told him how Dr. Collier, in order to keep the ſervants in humour with his favourite dog, by ſeeming rough with the animal himſelf on many occaſions, and crying out, Why will nobody knock this cur's brains out?

meant to conciliate their tenderneſs towards Pompey; he returned me for anſwer, "that the maxim was evidently falſe, and founded on ignorance of human life: that the ſervants would kick the dog the ſooner for having obtained ſuch a ſanction to their ſeverity: and I once (added he) chid my wife for beating the cat before the maid, who will now (ſaid I) treat puſs with cruelty perhaps, and plead her miſtreſs's example."

I aſked him upon this, if he ever diſputed with his wife? (I had heard that he loved her paſſionately.) "Perpetually (ſaid he): my wife had a particular reverence for cleanlineſs, and deſired the praiſe of neatneſs in her dreſs and furniture, as many ladies do, till they become troubleſome to their beſt friends, ſlaves to their own beſoms, and only ſigh for the hour of ſweeping their huſbands out of the houſe as dirt and uſeleſs lumber: a clean floor is *ſo* com-

ſortable, ſhe would ſay ſometimes, by way of twitting; till at laſt I told her, that I thought we had had talk enough about the *floor*, we would now have a touch at the *cieling*."

On another occaſion I have heard him blame her for a fault many people have, of ſetting the miſeries of their neighbours half unintentionally half wantonly before their eyes, ſhewing them the bad ſide of their profeſſion, ſituation, &c. He ſaid, "ſhe would lament the dependence of pupillage to a young heir, &c. and once told a waterman who rowed her along the Thames in a wherry, that he was no happier than a galley-ſlave, one being chained to the oar by authority, the other by want. I had however (ſaid he, laughing), the wit to get her daughter on my ſide always before we began the diſpute. She read comedy better than any body he ever heard (he ſaid); in tragedy ſhe mouthed too much."

Garrick told Mr. Thrale however, that ſhe was a little painted puppet, of no value at all, and quite diſguiſed with affectation, full of odd airs of rural elegance; and he made out ſome comical ſcenes, by mimicking her in a dialogue he pretended to have overheard: I do not know whether he meant ſuch ſtuff to be believed or no, it was ſo comical; nor did I indeed ever ſee him repreſent her ridiculouſly, though my huſband did. The intelligence I gained of her from old Levett, was only perpetual illneſs and perpetual opium. The picture I found of her at Litchfield was very pretty, and her daughter Mrs. Lucy Porter ſaid it was like. Mr. Johnſon has told me, that her hair was eminently beautiful, quite *blonde* like that of a baby; but that ſhe fretted about the colour, and was always deſirous to dye it black, which he very judiciouſly hindered her from doing. His account of their wedding we uſed to think ludicrous

enough — " I was riding to church (ſays Johnſon), and ſhe following on another ſingle horſe: ſhe hung back however, and I turned about to ſee whether ſhe could get her ſteed along, or what was the matter. I had however ſoon occaſion to ſee it was only coquetry, and *that I deſpiſed*, ſo quickening my pace a little, ſhe mended hers; but I believe there was a tear or two —pretty dear creature!"

Johnſon loved his dinner exceedingly, and has often ſaid in my hearing, perhaps for my edification, " that wherever the dinner is ill got there is poverty, or there is avarice, or there is ſtupidity; in ſhort, the family is ſomehow groſsly wrong: for (continued he) a man ſeldom thinks with more earneſtneſs of any thing than he does of his dinner; and if he cannot get that well dreſſed, he ſhould be ſuſpected of inaccuracy in other things." One day when he was ſpeaking upon

the ſubject, I aſked him, if he ever huffed his wife about his dinner? "So often (replied he), that at laſt ſhe called to me, and ſaid, Nay, hold Mr. Johnſon, and do not make a farce of thanking God for a dinner which in a few minutes you will proteſt not eatable."

When any diſputes aroſe between our married acquaintance however, Mr. Johnſon always ſided with the huſband, "whom (he ſaid) the woman had probably provoked ſo often, ſhe ſcarce knew when or how ſhe had diſobliged him firſt. Women (ſays Dr. Johnſon) give great offence by a contemptuous ſpirit of non-compliance on petty occaſions. The man calls his wife to walk with him in the ſhade, and ſhe feels a ſtrange deſire juſt at that moment to ſit in the ſun: he offers to read her a play, or ſing her a ſong, and ſhe calls the children in to diſturb them, or adviſes him to ſeize that opportunity of ſettling the family

accounts. Twenty ſuch tricks will the faithfulleſt wife in the world not refuſe to play, and then look aſtoniſhed when the fellow fetches in a miſtreſs. Boarding-ſchools were eſtabliſhed (continued he) for the conjugal quiet of the parents: the two partners cannot agree which child to fondle, nor how to fondle them, ſo they put the young ones to ſchool, and remove the cauſe of contention. The little girl pokes her head, the mother reproves her ſharply: Do not mind your mamma, ſays the father, my dear, but do your own way. The mother complains to me of this: Madam (ſaid I), your huſband is right all the while; he is with you but two hours of the day perhaps, and then you teize him by making the child cry. Are not ten hours enough for tuition? And are the hours of pleaſure ſo frequent in life, that when a man gets a couple of quiet ones to ſpend in familiar chat with his wife, they muſt be poiſoned by petty mortifications?

Put miſſey to ſchool; ſhe will learn to hold her head like her neighbours, and you will no longer torment your family for want of other talk."

The vacuity of life had at ſome early period of his life ſtruck ſo forcibly on the mind of Mr. Johnſon, that it became by repeated impreſſion his favourite hypotheſis, and the general tenor of his reaſonings commonly ended there, wherever they might begin. Such things therefore as other philoſophers often attribute to various and contradictory cauſes, appeared to him uniform enough; all was done to fill up the time, upon his principle. I uſed to tell him, that it was like the Clown's anſwer in All's well that ends well, of "Oh Lord, Sir!" for that it ſuited every occaſion. One man, for example, was profligate and wild, as we call it, followed the girls, or ſat ſtill at the gaming-table. "Why, life muſt be filled up (ſays Johnſon), and the man

who is not capable of intellectual pleaſures muſt content himſelf with ſuch as his ſenſes can afford." Another was a hoarder: "Why, a fellow muſt do ſomething; and what ſo eaſy to a narrow mind as hoarding halfpence till they turn into ſixpences."—Avarice was a vice againſt which, however, I never much heard Mr. Johnſon declaim, till one repreſented it to him connected with cruelty, or ſome ſuch diſgraceful companion. "Do not (ſaid he) diſcourage your children from hoarding, if they have a taſte to it: whoever lays up his penny rather than part with it for a cake, at leaſt is not the ſlave of groſs appetite; and ſhews beſides a preference always to be eſteemed, of the future to the preſent moment. Such a mind may be made a good one; but the natural ſpendthrift, who graſps his pleaſures greedily and coarſely, and cares for nothing but immediate indulgence, is very little to be valued above a negro." We talked of Lady Taviſtock, who grieved herſelf to

death for the loſs of her huſband—"She was rich and wanted employment (ſays Johnſon), ſo ſhe cried till ſhe loſt all power of reſtraining her tears: other women are forced to outlive their huſbands, who were juſt as much beloved, depend on it; but they have no time for grief: and I doubt not, if we had put my Lady Taviſtock into a ſmall chandler's ſhop, and given her a nurſe-child to tend, her life would have been ſaved. The poor and the buſy have no leiſure for ſentimental ſorrow." We were ſpeaking of a gentleman who loved his friend—"Make him prime miniſter (ſays Johnſon) and ſee how long his friend will be remembered." But he had a rougher anſwer for me, when I commended a ſermon preached by an intimate acquaintance of our own at the trading end of the town. "What was the ſubject, Madam (ſays Dr. Johnſon)?" Friendſhip, Sir (replied I). "Why now, is it not ſtrange that a wiſe man, like our dear little Evans,

ſhould take it in his head to preach on ſuch a ſubject, in a place where no one can be thinking of it?" Why, what are they thinking upon, Sir (ſaid I)? "Why, the men are thinking on their money I ſuppoſe, and the women are thinking of their mops."

Dr. Johnſon's knowledge and eſteem of what we call low or coarſe life was indeed prodigious; and he did not like that the upper ranks ſhould be dignified with the name of *the world*. Sir Joſhua Reynolds ſaid one day, that nobody *wore* laced coats now; and that once every body wore them. "See now (ſays Johnſon) how abſurd that is; as if the bulk of mankind conſiſted of fine gentlemen that came to him to ſit for their pictures. If every man who wears a laced coat (that he can pay for) was extirpated, who would miſs them?" With all this haughty contempt of gentility, no praiſe was more welcome to

Dr. Johnſon than that which he ſaid had the notions or manners of a gentleman: which character I have heard him define with accuracy, and deſcribe with elegance. "Officers (he ſaid) were falſely ſuppoſed to have the carriage of gentlemen; whereas no profeſſion left a ſtronger brand behind it than that of a ſoldier; and it was the eſſence of a gentleman's character to bear the viſible mark of no profeſſion whatever." He once named Mr. Berenger as the ſtandard of true elegance; but ſome one objecting that he too much reſembled the gentleman in Congreve's comedies, Mr. Johnſon ſaid, "We muſt fix them upon the famous Thomas Hervey, whoſe manners were poliſhed even to acuteneſs and brilliancy, though he loſt but little in ſolid power of reaſoning, and in genuine force of mind." Mr. Johnſon had however an avowed and ſcarcely limited partiality for all who bore the name or boaſted the alliance of an Aſton

or a Hervey; and when Mr. Thrale once aſked him which had been the happieſt period of his paſt life? he replied, "it was that year in which he ſpent one whole evening with M—-y Aſ—-n. That indeed (ſaid he) was not happineſs, it was rapture; but the thoughts of it ſweetened the whole year." I muſt add, that the evening alluded to was not paſſed *tête-à-tête*, but in a ſelect company, of which the preſent Lord Killmorey was one. "Molly (ſays Dr. Johnſon) was a beauty and a ſcholar, and a wit and whig; and ſhe talked all in praiſe of liberty: and ſo I made this epigram upon her—She was the loveliеſt creature I ever ſaw!!!

Liber ut eſſe velim, ſuaſiſti pulchra Maria,
Ut maneam liber—pulchra Maria, vale!"

Will it do this way in Engliſh, Sir (ſaid I)?

Perſuaſions to freedom fall oddly from you;
If freedom we ſeek—fair Maria, adieu!

"It will do well enough (replied he); but it is tranſlated by a lady, and the ladies never loved M——y Aſ——n." I aſked him what his wife thought of this attachment? "She was jealous to be ſure (ſaid he), and teized me ſometimes when I would let her; and one day, as a fortune-telling gipſey paſſed us when we were walking out in company with two or three friends in the country, ſhe made the wench look at my hand, but ſoon repented her curioſity; for (ſays the gipſey) Your heart is divided, Sir, between a Betty and a Molly: Betty loves you beſt, but you take moſt delight in Molly's company: when I turned about to laugh, I ſaw my wife was crying. Pretty charmer! ſhe had no reaſon!"

It was, I believe, long after the currents of life had driven him to a great diſtance from this lady, that he ſpent much of his time with Mrs.

F—zh—b—t, of whom he always ſpoke with eſteem and tenderneſs, and with a veneration very difficult to deſerve. "That woman (ſaid he) loved her huſband as we hope and deſire to be loved by our guardian angel. F—tzh—b—t was a gay good-humoured fellow, generous of his money and of his meat, and deſirous of nothing but cheerful ſociety among people diſtinguiſhed in *ſome* way, in *any way* I think; for Rouſſeau and St. Auſtin would have been equally welcome to his table and to his kindneſs: the lady however was of another way of thinking; her firſt care was to preſerve her huſband's ſoul from corruption; her ſecond, to keep his eſtate entire for their children: and I owed my good reception in the family to the idea ſhe had entertained, that I was fit company for F—tzh—b—t, whom I loved extremely. They dare not (ſaid ſhe) ſwear, and take other converſation-liberties before *you*." I aſked if her huſband returned her re-

gard? "He felt her influence too powerfully (replied Mr. Johnſon): no man will be fond of what forces him daily to feel himſelf inferior. She ſtood at the door of her Paradiſe in Derbyſhire, like the angel with the flaming ſword, to keep the devil at a diſtance. But ſhe was not immortal, poor dear! ſhe died, and her huſband felt at once afflicted and releaſed." I enquired if ſhe was handſome? "She would have been handſome for a queen (replied the panegyriſt); her beauty had more in it of majeſty than of attraction, more of the dignity of virtue than the vivacity of wit." The friend of this lady, Miſs B—thby, ſucceeded her in the management of Mr. F—tzh—b—t's family, and in the eſteem of Dr. Johnſon; though he told me ſhe puſhed her piety to bigotry, her devotion to enthuſiaſm; that ſhe ſomewhat diſqualified herſelf for the duties of *this* life, by her perpetual aſpirations after the *next:* ſuch was however the purity of her mind, he ſaid,

and ſuch the graces of her manner, that Lord Lyttelton and he uſed to ſtrive for her preference with an emulation that occaſioned hourly diſguſt, and ended in laſting animoſity. "You may ſee (ſaid he to me, when the Poets Lives were printed) that dear B—thby is at my heart ſtill. She *would* delight in that fellow Lyttelton's company though, all that I could do; and I cannot forgive even his memory the preference given by a mind like her's." I have heard Baretti ſay, that when this lady died, Dr. Johnſon was almoſt diſtracted with his grief; and that the friends about him had much ado to calm the violence of his emotion. Dr. Taylor too related once to Mr. Thrale and me, that when he loſt his wife, the negro Francis ran away, though in the middle of the night, to Weſtminſter, to fetch Dr. Taylor to his maſter, who was all but wild with exceſs of ſorrow, and ſcarce knew him when he arrived: after

ſome minutes however, the doctor propoſed their going to prayers, as the only rational method of calming the diſorder this misfortune had occaſioned in both their ſpirits. Time, and reſignation to the will of God, cured every breach in his heart before I made acquaintance with him, though he always perſiſted in ſaying he never rightly recovered the loſs of his wife. It is in alluſion to her that he records the obſervation of a female critic, as he calls her, in Gay's Life; and the lady of great beauty and elegance, mentioned in the criticiſms upon Pope's epitaphs, was Miſs Molly Aſton. The perſon ſpoken of in his ſtrictures upon Young's poetry, is the writer of theſe Anecdotes, to whom he likewiſe addreſſed the following verſes when he was in the Iſle of Sky with Mr. Boſwell. The letters written in his journey, I uſed to tell him, were better than the printed book; and he was not diſpleaſed at my having taken the

pains to copy them all over. Here is the Latin ode:

Permeo terras, ubi nuda rupes
Saxeas miſcet nebulis ruinas,
Torva ubi rident ſteriles coloni
Rura laboret.

Pervagor gentes, hominum feroram
Vita ubi nullo decorata cultu,
Squallet informis, tugurique fumis
Fœda lateſcit.

Inter erroris ſalebroſa longi,
Inter ignotæ ſtrepitus loquelæ,
Quot modis mecum, quid agat requiro
Thralia dulcis?

Seu viri curas pia nupta mulcet,
Seu fovet mater ſobolem benigna,
Sive cum libris novitate paſcit
Sedula mentem:

Sit memor noſtri, fideique merces,
Stet fides conſtans, meritoque blandum
Thraliæ diſcant reſonare nomen
Littora Skiæ.

On another occaſion I can boaſt verſes from Dr. Johnſon.—As I went into his room the morning of my birth-day once, and ſaid to him, Nobody ſends me any

verſes now, becauſe I am five-and-thirty years old; and Stella was fed with them till forty-ſix, I remember. My being juſt recovered from illneſs and confinement will account for the manner in which he burſt out ſuddenly, for ſo he did without the leaſt previous heſitation whatſoever, and without having entertained the ſmalleſt intention towards it half a minute before:

Oft in danger, yet alive,
We are come to thirty-five;
Long may better years arrive,
Better years than thirty-five.
Could philoſophers contrive
Life to ſtop at thirty-five,
Time his hours ſhould never drive
O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
High to ſoar, and deep to dive,
Nature gives at thirty-five.
Ladies, ſtock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five:
For howe'er we boaſt and ſtrive,
Life declines from thirty-five:
He that ever hopes to thrive
Muſt begin by thirty-five;
And all who wiſely wiſh to wive
Muſt look on Thrale at thirty-five.

" And now (ſaid he, as I was writing them down), you may ſee what it is to come for poetry to a Dictionary-maker; you may obſerve that the rhymes run in alphabetical order exactly."——And ſo they do.

Mr. Johnſon did indeed poſſeſs an almoſt Tuſcan power of improviſation: when he called to my daughter, who was conſulting with a friend about a new gown and dreſſed hat ſhe thought of wearing to an aſſembly, thus ſuddenly, while ſhe hoped he was not liſtening to their converſation,

Wear the gown, and wear the hat,
Snatch thy pleaſures while they laſt;
Hadſt thou nine lives like a cat,
Soon thoſe nine lives would be paſt.

It is impoſſible to deny to ſuch little ſallies the power of the Florentines, who do not permit their verſes to be ever written down though they often deſerve it, becauſe, as they expreſs it, *coſi ſe perderebbi la poca gloria.*

As for tranſlations, we uſed to make him ſometimes run off with one or two in a good humour. He was praiſing this ſong of Metaſtaſio,

Deh, ſe piacermi vuoi,
Laſcia i ſoſpetti tuoi,
Non mi turbar conqueſto
Moleſto dubitar:
Chi ciecamente crede,
Impegna a ſerbar fede;
Chi ſempre inganno aſpetta,
Alletta ad ingannar.

"Should you like it in Engliſh (ſaid he) thus?"

Would you hope to gain my heart,
Bid your teizing doubts depart;
He who blindly truſts, will find
Faith from every generous mind:
He who ſtill expects deceit,
Only teaches how to cheat.

Mr. Baretti coaxed him likewiſe one day at Streatham out of a tranſlation of Emirena's ſpeech to the falſe courtier Aquileius, and it is probably printed before now, as I think two or three

people took copies; but perhaps it has ſlipt their memories.

Ah! tu in corte invecchiaſti, e giurerei
Che fra i pochi non ſei tenace ancora
Dell' antica oneſtà: quando biſogna,
Saprai ſereno in volto
Vezzeggiare un nemico; acciò vi cada,
Aprirgli innanzi un precipizio, e poi
Piangerne la caduta. Offrirti a tutti
E non eſſer che tuo; di falſe lodi
Veſtir le accuſe, ed aggravar le colpe
Nel farne la difeſa, ognor dal trono
I buoni allontanar; d'ogni caſtigo
Laſciar l'odio allo ſcettro, e d'ogni dono
Il merito uſurpar: tener naſcoſto
Sotto un zelo apparente un empio fine,
Ne fabbricar che ſulle altrui rouine.

Grown old in courts, thou art not ſurely one
Who keeps the rigid rules of ancient honour;
Well ſkill'd to ſooth a foe with looks of kindneſs,
To ſink the fatal precipice before him,
And then lament his fall with ſeeming friendſhip:
Open to all, true only to thyſelf,
Thou know'ſt thoſe arts which blaſt with envious praiſe,
Which aggravate a fault with feign'd excuſes,
And drive diſcountenanc'd virtue from the throne:
That leave the blame of rigour to the prince,

And of his every gift uſurp the merit;
That hide in ſeeming zeal a wicked purpoſe,
And only build upon another's ruin.

Theſe characters Dr. Johnſon however did not delight in reading, or in hearing of: he always maintained that the world was not half as wicked as it was repreſented; and he might very well continue in that opinion, as he reſolutely drove from him every ſtory that could make him change it; and when Mr. Bickerſtaff's flight confirmed the report of his guilt, and my huſband ſaid in anſwer to Johnſon's aſtoniſhment, that he had long been a ſuſpected man: "By thoſe who look cloſe to the ground, dirt will be ſeen, Sir (was the lofty reply): I hope I ſee things from a greater diſtance."

His deſire to go abroad, particularly to ſee Italy, was very great; and he had a longing wiſh too to leave ſome Latin verſes at the Grand Chartreux. He

loved indeed the very act of travelling, and I cannot tell how far one might have taken him in a carriage before he would have wiſhed for refreſhment. He was therefore in ſome reſpects an admirable companion on the road, as he piqued himſelf upon feeling no inconvenience, and on deſpiſing no accommodations. On the other hand however, he expected no one elſe to feel any, and felt exceedingly inflamed with anger if any one complained of the rain, the ſun, or the duſt. "How (ſaid he) do other people bear them? As for general uneaſineſs, or complaints of long confinement in a carriage, he conſidered all lamentations on their account as proofs of an empty head, and a tongue deſirous to talk without materials of converſation. "A mill that goes without griſt (ſaid he) is as good a companion as ſuch creatures."

I pitied a friend before him, who had a whining wife that found every thing

painful to her, and nothing pleaſing—"He does not know that ſhe whimpers (ſays Johnſon); when a door has creaked for a fortnight together, you may obſerve—the maſter will ſcarcely give ſixpence to get it oiled."

Of another lady, more inſipid than offenſive, I once heard him ſay, "She has ſome ſoftneſs indeed, but ſo has a pillow." And when one obſerved in reply, that her huſband's fidelity and attachment were exemplary, notwithſtanding this low account at which her perfections were rated—"Why Sir (cries the Doctor), being married to thoſe ſleepy-ſouled women, is juſt like playing at cards for nothing: no paſſion is excited, and the time is filled up. I do not however envy a fellow one of thoſe honey-ſuckle wives for my part, as they are but *creepers* at beſt, and commonly deſtroy the tree they ſo tenderly cling about."

For a lady of quality, ſince dead, who received us at her huſband's ſeat in Wales with leſs attention than he had long been accuſtomed to, he had a rougher denunciation: "That woman (cries Johnſon) is like ſour ſmall-beer, the beverage of her table, and produce of the wretched country ſhe lives in: like that, ſhe could never have been a good thing, and even that bad thing is ſpoiled." This was in the ſame vein of aſperity, and I believe with ſomething like the ſame provocation, that he obſerved of a Scotch lady, "that ſhe reſembled a dead nettle; were ſhe alive (ſaid he), ſhe would ſting."

Mr. Johnſon's hatred of the Scotch is ſo well known, and ſo many of his *bons mots* expreſſive of that hatred have been already repeated in ſo many books and pamphlets, that 'tis perhaps ſcarcely worth while to write down the converſation between him and a friend of that

nation who always reſides in London, and who at his return from the Hebrides aſked him, with a firm tone of voice, What he thought of his country? "That it is a very vile country to be ſure, Sir," (returned for anſwer Dr. Johnſon.) Well, Sir! replies the other ſomewhat mortified, God made it. "Certainly he did (anſwers Mr. Johnſon again); but we muſt always remember that he made it for Scotchmen, and compariſons are odious, Mr. S——; but God made hell."

Dr. Johnſon did not I think much delight in that kind of converſation which conſiſts in telling ſtories: "every body (ſaid he) tells ſtories of me, and I tell ſtories of nobody. I do not recollect (added he), that I have ever told *you*, that have been always favourites, above three ſtories; but I hope I do not play the Old Fool, and force people to hear unintereſting narratives, only becauſe I once was diverted with them myſelf." He

was however an enemy to that ſort of talk from the famous Mr. Foote, "whoſe happineſs of manner in relating was ſuch (he ſaid) as ſubdued arrogance and rouſed ſtupidity: *His* ſtories were truly like thoſe of Biron in Love's Labour Loſt, ſo *very* attractive,

> That aged ears play'd truant with his tales,
> And younger hearings were quite raviſh'd;
> So ſweet and voluble was his diſcourſe.

Of all converſers however (added he), the late Hawkins Browne was the moſt delightful with whom I ever was in company: his talk was at once ſo elegant, ſo apparently artleſs, ſo pure, and ſo pleaſing, it ſeemed a perpetual ſtream of ſentiment, enlivened by gaiety, and ſparkling with images." When I aſked Dr. Johnſon, who was the *beſt* man he had ever known? "Pſalmanazar," was the unexpected reply: he ſaid, likewiſe, "that though a native of France, as his friend imagined, he poſſeſſed more of the Engliſh language than any one of

the other foreigners who had ſeparately fallen in his way. Though there was much eſteem however, there was I believe but little confidence between them; they converſed merely about general topics, religion and learning, of which both were undoubtedly ſtupendous examples; and, with regard to true Chriſtian perfection, I have heard Johnſon ſay, "That George Pſalmanazar's piety, penitence, and virtue exceeded almoſt what we read as wonderful even in the lives of ſaints."

I forget in what year it was that this extraordinary perſon lived and died at a houſe in Old-ſtreet, where Mr. Johnſon was witneſs to his talents and virtues, and to his final preference of the church of England, after having ſtudied, diſgraced, and adorned ſo many modes of worſhip. The name he went by, was not ſuppoſed by his friend to be that of his family, but all enquiries were vain; his reaſons for concealing his

original were penitentiary; he deſerved no other name than that of the impoſtor, he ſaid. That portion of the Univerſal Hiſtory which was written by him, does not ſeem to me to be compoſed with peculiar ſpirit, but all traces of the wit and the wanderer were probably worn out before he undertook the work.—His pious and patient endurance of a tedious illneſs, ending in an exemplary death, confirmed the ſtrong impreſſion his merit had made upon the mind of Mr. Johnſon. "It is ſo *very* difficult (ſaid he, always) for a ſick man not to be a ſcoundrel. Oh! ſet the pillows ſoft, here is Mr. Grumbler o'coming: Ah! let no air in for the world, Mr. Grumbler will be here preſently."

This perpetual preference is ſo offenſive where the privileges of ſickneſs are beſides ſupported by wealth, and nouriſhed by dependence, that one cannot much wonder that a rough mind is revolted by them. It was however at once comical and

touchant (as the French call it), to obſerve Mr. Johnſon ſo habitually watchful againſt his ſort of behaviour, that he was often ready to ſuſpect himſelf of it; and when one aſked him gently, how he did?—"Ready to become a ſcoundrel, Madam (would commonly be the anſwer): with a little more ſpoiling you will, I think, make me a complete raſcal."

His deſire of doing good was not however leſſened by his averſion to a ſick chamber: he would have made an ill man well by any expence or fatigue of his own, ſooner than any of the canters. Canter indeed was he none: he would forget to aſk people after the health of their neareſt relations, and ſay in excuſe, "That he knew they did not care: why ſhould they? (ſays he;) every one in this world has as much as they can do in caring for themſelves, and few have leiſure really to *think* of their neighbours diſtreſſes, however they may delight their tongues with *talking* of them."

The natural depravity of mankind and remains of original ſin were ſo fixed in Mr. Johnſon's opinion, that he was indeed a moſt acute obſerver of their effects; and uſed to ſay ſometimes, half in jeſt half in earneſt, that they were the remains of his old tutor Mandeville's inſtructions. As a book however, he took care always loudly to condemn the Fable of the Bees, but not without adding, "that it was the work of a thinking man."

I have in former days heard Dr. Collier of the Commons loudly condemned for uttering ſentiments, which twenty years after I have heard as loudly applauded from the lips of Dr. Johnſon, concerning the well-known writer of that celebrated work: but if people will live long enough in this capricious world, ſuch inſtances of partiality will ſhock them leſs and leſs, by frequent repetition. Mr. Johnſon knew mankind, and wiſhed to

mend them: he therefore, to the piety and pure religion, the untainted integrity, and ſcrupulous morals of my earlieſt and moſt diſintereſted friend, judiciouſly contrived to join a cautious attention to the capacity of his hearers, and a prudent reſolution not to leſſen the influence of his learning and virtue, by caſual freaks of humour, and irregular ſtarts of ill-managed merriment. He did not wiſh to confound, but to inform his auditors; and though he did not appear to ſolicit benevolence, he always wiſhed to retain authority, and leave his company impreſſed with the idea, that it was his to teach in this world, and theirs to learn. What wonder then that all ſhould receive with docility from Johnſon thoſe doctrines, which propagated by Collier they drove away from them with ſhouts! Dr. Johnſon was not grave however becauſe he knew not how to be merry. No man loved laughing better, and his vein of humour

was rich, and apparently inexhauſtible; though Dr. Goldſmith ſaid once to him, We ſhould change companions oftener, we exhauſt one another, and ſhall ſoon be both of us worn out. Poor Goldſmith was to him indeed like the earthen pot to the iron one in Fontaine's fables; it had been better for *him* perhaps, that they had changed companions oftener; yet no experience of his antagoniſt's ſtrength hindered him from continuing the conteſt. He uſed to remind me always of that verſe in Berni,

Il pover uomo che non ſen' èra accorto,
Andava combattendo—ed era morto.

Mr. Johnſon made him a comical anſwer one day, when ſeeming to repine at the ſucceſs of Beattie's Eſſay on Truth—"Here's ſuch a ſtir (ſaid he) about a fellow that has written one book, and I have written many." Ah, Doctor (ſays his friend), there go two-and-forty ſixpences you know to one guinea.

They had ſpent an evening with Eaton Graham too, I remember hearing it was at ſome tavern; his heart was open, and he began inviting away; told what he could do to make his college agreeable, and begged the viſit might not be delayed. Goldſmith thanked him, and propoſed ſetting out with Mr. Johnſon for Buckinghamſhire in a fortnight; "Nay hold, Dr. *Minor* (ſays the other), I did not invite you."

Many ſuch mortifications aroſe in the courſe of their intimacy to be ſure, but few more laughable than when the newſpapers had tacked them together as the pedant and his flatterer in Love's Labour loſt. Dr. Goldſmith came to his friend, fretting and foaming, and vowing vengeance againſt the printer, &c. till Mr. Johnſon, tired of the buſtle, and deſirous to think of ſomething elſe, cried out at laſt, "Why, what would'ſt thou have, dear Doctor! who the plague is

hurt with all this nonſenſe? and how is a man the worſe I wonder in his health, purſe, or character, for being called *Holofernes?*" I do not know (replies the other) how you may reliſh being called Holofernes, but I do not like at leaſt to play *Goodman Dull.*

Dr. Johnſon was indeed famous for diſregarding public abuſe. When the people criticiſed and anſwered his pamphlets, papers, &c. "Why now, theſe fellows are only advertiſing my book (he would ſay); it is ſurely better a man ſhould be abuſed than forgotten." When Churchill nettled him however, it is certain he felt the ſting, or that poet's works would hardly have been left out of the edition. Of that however I have no right to decide; the bookſellers perhaps did not put Churchill on their liſt. I know Mr. Johnſon was exceedingly zealous to declare how very little he had to do with the ſelection. Churchill's

works too might poſſibly be rejected by him upon a higher principle; the higheſt indeed, if he was inſpired by the ſame laudable motive which made him reject every authority for a word in his dictionary that could only be gleaned from writers dangerous to religion or morality — "I would not (ſaid he) ſend people to look for words in a book, that by ſuch a caſual ſeizure of the mind might chance to miſlead it for ever." In conſequence of this delicacy, Mrs. Montague once obſerved, That were an angel to give the *imprimatur*, Dr. Johnſon's works were among thoſe very few which would not be leſſened by a line. That ſuch praiſe from ſuch a lady ſhould delight him, is not ſtrange; inſenſibility in a caſe like that, muſt have been the reſult alone of arrogance acting on ſtupidity. Mr. Johnſon had indeed no diſlike to the commendations which he knew he deſerved: "What ſignifies proteſting ſo againſt flattery

(would he cry)! when a perſon ſpeaks well of one, it muſt be either true or falſe, you know; if true, let us rejoice in his good opinion; if he lies, it is a proof at leaſt that he loves more to pleaſe me, than to ſit ſilent when he need ſay nothing."

That natural roughneſs of his manner, ſo often mentioned, would, notwithſtanding the regularity of his notions, burſt through them all from time to time; and he once bade a very celebrated lady, who praiſed him with too much zeal perhaps, or perhaps too ſtrong an emphaſis (which always offended him), "conſider what her flattery was worth before ſhe choaked *him* with it." A few more winters paſſed in the talking world ſhewed him the value of that friend's commendations however; and he was very ſorry for the diſguſting ſpeech he made her.

I uſed to think Mr. Johnſon's determined preference of a cold monotonous talker over an emphatical and violent one, would make him quite a favourite among the men of *ton*, whoſe inſenſibility, or affectation of perpetual calmneſs, certainly did not give to him the offence it does to many. He loved "converſation without effort (he ſaid);" and the encomiums I have heard him ſo often pronounce on the manners of Topham Beauclerc in ſociety, conſtantly ended in that peculiar praiſe, that "it was without *effort*."

We were talking of Richardſon who wrote Clariſſa: "You think I love flattery (ſays Dr. Johnſon), and ſo I do; but a little too much always diſguſts me: that fellow Richardſon, on the contrary, could not be contented to ſail quietly down the ſtream of reputation, without longing to taſte the froth from every ſtroke of the oar."

With regard to ſlight inſults from newſpaper abuſe, I have already declared his notions: "They ſting one (ſays he) but as a fly ſtings a horſe; and the eagle will not catch flies." He once told me however, that Cummyns the famous Quaker, whoſe friendſhip he valued very highly, fell a ſacrifice to their inſults, having declared on his death-bed to Dr. Johnſon, that the pain of an anonymous letter, written in ſome of the common prints of the day, faſtened on his heart, and threw him into the ſlow fever of which he died.

Nor was Cummyns the only valuable member ſo loſt to ſociety: Hawkeſworth, the pious, the virtuous, and the wiſe, for want of that fortitude which caſts a ſhield before the merits of his friend, fell a lamented ſacrifice to wanton malice and cruelty, I know not how provoked; but all in turn feel the laſh of cenſure in a country where, as every

baby is allowed to carry a whip, no perſon can eſcape except by chance. The unpubliſhed crimes, unknown diſtreſſes, and even death itſelf, however, daily occurring in leſs liberal governments and leſs free nations, ſoon teach one to content one's ſelf with ſuch petty grievances, and make one acknowledge that the undiſtinguiſhing ſeverity of newſpaper abuſe may in ſome meaſure diminiſh the diffuſion of vice and folly in Great Britain, and while they fright delicate minds into forced refinements and affected inſipidity, they are uſeful to the great cauſes of virtue in the ſoul, and liberty in the ſtate; and though ſenſibility often ſinks under the roughneſs of their preſcriptions, it would be no good policy to take away their licence.

Knowing the ſtate of Mr. Johnſon's nerves, and how eaſily they were affected, I forbore reading in a new Magazine one day, the death of a Samuel Johnſon

who expired that month; but my companion ſnatching up the book, ſaw it himſelf, and contrary to my expectation—"Oh (ſaid he)! I hope Death will now be glutted with Sam. Johnſons, and let me alone for ſome time to come: I read of another nameſake's departure laſt week."—Though Mr. Johnſon was commonly affected even to agony at the thoughts of a friend's dying, he troubled himſelf very little with the complaints they might make to him about ill health. "Dear Doctor (ſaid he one day to a common acquaintance, who lamented the tender ſtate of his *inſide*), do not be like the ſpider, man; and ſpin converſation thus inceſſantly out of thy own bowels."—I told him of another friend who ſuffered grievouſly with the gout—"He will live a vaſt many years for all that (replied he), and then what ſignifies how much he ſuffers? but he will die at laſt, poor fellow, there's the miſery; gout ſeldom takes the fort by a

coup-de-main, but turning the ſiege into a blockade, obliges it to ſurrender at diſcretion."

A lady he thought well of, was diſordered in her health—"What help has ſhe called in (enquired Johnſon)?" Dr. James, Sir; was the reply. "What is her diſeaſe?" Oh, nothing poſitive, rather a gradual and gentle decline. "She will die then, pretty dear (anſwered he)! When Death's pale horſe runs away with perſons on full ſpeed, an active phyſician may poſſibly give them a turn; but if he carries them on an even ſlow pace, down hill too! no care nor ſkill can ſave them!"

When Garrick was on his laſt ſick-bed, no arguments, or recitals of ſuch facts as I had heard, would perſuade Mr. Johnſon of his danger: he had prepoſſeſſed himſelf with a notion, that to ſay a man was ſick, was very near wiſhing

him ſo; and few things offended him more, than prognoſticating even the death of an ordinary acquaintance. "Ay, ay (ſaid he), Swift knew the world pretty well, when he ſaid, that

> Some dire misfortune to portend,
> No enemy can match a friend."

The danger then of Mr. Garrick, or of Mr. Thrale, whom he loved better, was an image which no one durſt preſent before his view; he always perſiſted in the poſſibility and hope of their recovering diſorders from which no human creatures by human means alone ever did recover. His diſtreſs for their loſs was for that very reaſon poignant to exceſs; but his fears of his own ſalvation were exceſſive: his truly tolerant ſpirit, and Chriſtian charity, which *hopeth all things*, and *believeth all things*, made him rely ſecurely on the ſafety of his friends, while his earneſt aſpiration after a bleſſed immortality made him cautious of his

own ſteps, and timorous concerning their conſequences. He knew how much had been given, and filled his mind with fancies of how much would be required, till his impreſſed imagination was often diſturbed by them, and his health ſuffered from the ſenſibility of his too tender conſcience: a real Chriſtian is *ſo* apt to find his taſk above his power of performance!

Mr. Johnſon did not however give into ridiculous refinements either of ſpeculation or practice, or ſuffer himſelf to be deluded by ſpecious appearances. "I have had duſt thrown in my eyes too often (would he ſay), to be blinded ſo. Let us never confound matters of belief with matters of opinion."—Some one urged in his preſence the preference of hope to poſſeſſion; and as I remember, produced an Italian ſonnet on the ſubject. "Let us not (cries Johnſon) amuſe ourſelves with ſubtleties and ſonnets, when

ſpeaking about hope, which is the follower of faith and the precurſor of eternity; but if you only mean thoſe air-built hopes which to-day excites and to-morrow will deſtroy, let us talk away, and remember that we only talk of the pleaſures of hope; we feel thoſe of poſſeſſion, and no man in his ſenſes would change the laſt for the firſt: ſuch hope is a mere bubble, that by a gentle breath may be blown to what ſize you will almoſt, but a rough blaſt burſts it at once. Hope is an amuſement rather than a good, and adapted to none but very tranquil minds." The truth is, Mr. Johnſon hated what we call unprofitable chat; and to a gentleman who had differted ſome time about the natural hiſtory of the mouſe—"I wonder what ſuch a one would have ſaid (cried Johnſon), if he had ever had the luck to ſee a *lion!*"

I well remember that at Brighthelmſtone once, when he was not preſent,

Mr. Beauclerc aſſerted that he was afraid of ſpirits; and I, who was ſecretly offended at the charge, aſked him, the firſt opportunity I could find, What ground he had ever given to the world for ſuch a report? "I can (replied he) recollect nothing nearer it, than my telling Dr. Lawrence many years ago, that a long time after my poor mother's death, I heard her voice call *Sam!*" What anſwer did the doctor make to your ſtory, Sir, ſaid I? "None in the world," (replied he;) and ſuddenly changed the converſation. Now as Mr. Johnſon had a moſt unſhaken faith, without any mixture of credulity, this ſtory muſt either have been ſtrictly true, or his perſuaſion of its truth the effect of diſordered ſpirits. I relate the anecdote preciſely as he told it me; but could not prevail on him to draw out the talk into length for further ſatisfaction of my curioſity.

As Johnſon was the firmeſt of believers without being credulous, ſo he was the

moſt charitable of mortals without being what we call an active friend. Admirable at giving counſel, no man ſaw his way ſo clearly; but he would not ſtir a finger for the aſſiſtance of thoſe to whom he was willing enough to give advice: beſides that, he had principles of lazineſs, and could be indolent by rule. To hinder your death, or procure you a dinner, I mean if really in want of one; his earneſtneſs, his exertions could not be prevented, though health and purſe and eaſe were all deſtroyed by their violence. If you wanted a ſlight favour, you muſt apply to people of other diſpoſitions; for not a ſtep would Johnſon move to obtain a man a vote in a ſociety, to repay a compliment which might be uſeful or pleaſing, to write a letter of requeſt, or to obtain a hundred pounds a year more for a friend, who perhaps had already two or three. No force could urge him to diligence, no importunity could conquer his reſolu-

tion of ſtanding ſtill. "What good are we doing with all this ado (would he ſay)? deareſt Lady, let's hear no more of it!" I have however more than once in my life forced him on ſuch ſervices, but with extreme difficulty.

We parted at his door one evening when I had teized him for many weeks to write a recommendatory letter of a little boy to his ſchool-maſter; and after he had faithfully promiſed to do this prodigious feat before we met again—Do not forget dear Dick Sir, ſaid I, as he went out of the coach: he turned back, ſtood ſtill two minutes on the carriage-ſtep—"When I have written my letter for Dick, I may hang myſelf, mayn't I?"—and turned away in a very ill humour indeed.

Though apt enough to take ſudden likings or averſions to people he occaſionally met, he would never haſtily pro-

nounce upon their character; and when ſeeing him juſtly delighted with Solander's converſation, I obſerved once that he was a man of great parts who talked from a full mind—" It may be ſo (ſaid Mr. Johnſon), but you cannot know it yet, nor I neither: the pump works well, to be ſure! but how, I wonder, are we to decide in ſo very ſhort an acquaintance, whether it is ſupplied by a ſpring or a reſervoir?"—He always made a great difference in his eſteem between talents and erudition; and when he ſaw a perſon eminent for literature, though wholly unconverſable, it fretted him. " Teaching ſuch tonies (ſaid he to me one day), is like ſetting a lady's diamonds in lead, which only obſcures the luſtre of the ſtone, and makes the poſſeſſor aſhamed on't." Uſeful and what we call every-day knowledge had the moſt of his juſt praiſe. " Let your boy learn arithmetic dear Madam," was his advice to the mother of a rich young heir: " he

will not then be a prey to every raſcal which this town ſwarms with: teach him the value of money, and how to reckon it; ignorance to a wealthy lad of one-and-twenty, is only ſo much fat to a ſick ſheep: it juſt ſerves to call the *rooks* about him."

And all that prey in vice or folly
Joy to ſee their quarry fly;
Here the gameſter light and jolly,
There the lender grave and ſly.

Theſe improviſo lines, making part of a long copy of verſes which my regard for the youth on whoſe birth-day they were written obliges me to ſuppreſs leſt they ſhould give him pain, ſhew a mind of ſurpriſing activity and warmth; the more ſo as he was paſt ſeventy years of age when he compoſed them: but nothing more certainly offended Mr. Johnſon, than the idea of a man's faculties (mental ones I mean) decaying by time; "It is not true, Sir (would he ſay); what a man could once do, he would always do, un-

leſs indeed by dint of vicious indolence, and compliance with the nephews and nieces who crowd round an old fellow, and help to tuck him in, till he, contented with the exchange of fame for eaſe, e'en reſolves to let them ſet the pillows at his back, and gives no further proof of his exiſtence than juſt to ſuck the jelly that prolongs it."

For ſuch a life or ſuch a death Dr. Johnſon was indeed never intended by Providence: his mind was like a warm climate, which brings every thing to perfection ſuddenly and vigorouſly, not like the alembicated productions of artificial fire, which always betray the difficulty of bringing them forth when their ſize is diſproportionate to their flavour. *Je ferois un Roman tout comme un autre, mais la vie n'eſt point un Roman,* ſays a famous French writer; and this was ſo certainly the opinion of the Author of the Rambler, that all his converſation

precepts tended towards the diſperſion of romantic ideas, and were chiefly intended to promote the cultivation of

> That which before thee lies in daily life.
>
> MILTON.

And when he talked of authors, his praiſe went ſpontaneouſly to ſuch paſſages as are ſure in his own phraſe to leave ſomething behind them uſeful on common occaſions, or obſervant of common manners. For example, it was not the two *laſt*, but the two *firſt*, volumes of Clariſſa that he prized; "For give me a ſick bed, and a dying lady (ſaid he), and I'll be pathetic myſelf: but Richardſon had picked the kernel of life (he ſaid), while Fielding was contented with the huſk." It was not King Lear curſing his daughters, or deprecating the ſtorm, that I remember his commendations of; but Iago's ingenious malice, and ſubtle revenge; or prince Hal's gay compliance with the vices of Fal-

ſtaff, whom he all along deſpiſed. Thoſe plays had indeed no rivals in Johnſon's favour: "No man but Shakeſpeare (he ſaid) could have drawn Sir John."

His manner of criticiſing and commending Addiſon's proſe, was the ſame in converſation as we read it in the printed ſtrictures, and many of the expreſſions uſed have been heard to fall from him on common occaſions. It was notwithſtanding obſervable enough (or I fancied ſo), that he did never like, though he always thought fit to praiſe it; and his praiſes reſembled thoſe of a man who extols the ſuperior elegance of high painted porcelain, while he himſelf always chuſes to eat off *plate*. I told him ſo one day, and he neither denied it nor appeared diſpleaſed.

Of the pathetic in poetry he never liked to ſpeak, and the only paſſage I ever heard him applaud as particularly

tender in any common book, was Jane Shore's exclamation in the laſt act,

Forgive me! *but* forgive me!

It was not however from the want of a ſuſceptible heart that he hated to cite tender expreſſions, for he was more ſtrongly and more violently affected by the force of words repreſenting ideas capable of affecting him at all, than any other man in the world I believe; and when he would try to repeat the celebrated *Proſa Eccleſiaſtica pro Mortuis*, as it is called, beginning *Dies iræ, Dies illa*, he could never paſs the ſtanza ending thus, *Tantus labor non ſit caſſus*, without burſting into a flood of tears; which ſenſibility I uſed to quote againſt him when he would inveigh againſt devotional poetry, and proteſt that all religious verſes were cold and feeble, and unworthy the ſubject, which ought to be treated with higher reverence, he ſaid, than either poets or painters could preſume to excite or beſtow. Nor can any

thing be a ſtronger proof of Dr. Johnſon's piety than ſuch an expreſſion; for his idea of poetry was magnificent indeed, and very fully was he perſuaded of its ſuperiority over every other talent beſtowed by heaven on man. His chapter upon that particular ſubject in his Raſſelas, is really written from the fulneſs of his heart, and quite in his beſt manner I think. I am not ſo ſure that this is the proper place to mention his writing that ſurpriſing little volume in a week or ten days time, in order to obtain money for his journey to Litchfield when his mother lay upon her laſt ſickbed.

Promptitude of thought indeed, and quickneſs of expreſſion, were among the peculiar felicities of Johnſon: his notions roſe up like the dragon's teeth ſowed by Cadmus all ready clothed, and in bright armour too, fit for immediate battle. He was therefore (as ſomebody is ſaid to have expreſſed it) a tre-

mendous converſer, and few people ventured to try their ſkill againſt an antagoniſt with whom contention was ſo hopeleſs. One gentleman however, who dined at a nobleman's houſe in his company and that of Mr. Thrale, to whom I was obliged for the anecdote, was willing to enter the liſts in defence of King William's character, and having oppoſed and contradicted Johnſon two or three times petulantly enough; the maſter of the houſe began to feel uneaſy, and expect diſagreeable conſequences: to avoid which he ſaid, loud enough for the Doctor to hear, Our friend here has no meaning now in all this, except juſt to relate at club to-morrow how he teized Johnſon at dinner to-day—this is all to do himſelf *honour*. No, upon my word, replied the other, I ſee no *honour* in it, whatever you may do. "Well, Sir! (returned Mr. Johnſon ſternly) if you do not *ſee* the *honour*, I am ſure I *feel* the *diſgrace*."

A young fellow, leſs confident of his own abilities, lamenting one day that he had loſt all his Greek—"I believe it happened at the ſame time, Sir (ſaid Johnſon), that I loſt all my large eſtate in Yorkſhire."

But however roughly he might be ſuddenly provoked to treat a harmleſs exertion of vanity, he did not wiſh to inflict the pain he gave, and was ſometimes very ſorry when he perceived the people to ſmart more than they deſerved. How harſhly you treated that man to-day, ſaid I once, who harangued us ſo about gardening—"I am ſorry (ſaid he) if I vexed the creature, for there certainly is no harm in a fellow's rattling a rattle-box, only don't let him think that he thunders."—The Lincolnſhire lady who ſhewed him a grotto ſhe had been making, came off no better as I remember: Would it not be a pretty cool habitation in ſummer? ſaid ſhe,

Mr. Johnſon! "I think it would, Madam (replied he),—for a toad."

All deſire of diſtinction indeed had a ſure enemy in Mr. Johnſon. We met a friend driving ſix very ſmall ponies, and ſtopt to admire them. "Why does nobody (ſaid our doctor) begin the faſhion of driving ſix ſpavined horſes, all ſpavined of the ſame leg? it would have a mighty pretty effect, and produce the diſtinction of doing ſomething worſe than the common way."

When Mr. Johnſon had a mind to compliment any one, he did it with more dignity to himſelf, and better effect upon the company, than any man. I can recollect but few inſtances indeed, though perhaps that may be more my fault than his. When Sir Joſhua Reynolds left the room one day, he ſaid, "There goes a man not to be ſpoiled by proſperity." And when Mrs. Mon-

tague ſhewed him ſome China plates which had once belonged to Queen Elizabeth, he told her, "that they had no reaſon to be aſhamed of their preſent poſſeſſor, who was ſo little inferior to the firſt." I likewiſe remember that he pronounced one day at my houſe a moſt lofty panegyric upon Jones the Orientaliſt, who ſeemed little pleaſed with the praiſe, for what cauſe I know not. He was not at all offended, when comparing all our acquaintance to ſome animal or other, we pitched upon the elephant for his reſemblance, adding that the proboſcis of that creature was like his mind moſt exactly, ſtrong to buffet even the tyger, and pliable to pick up even the pin. The truth is, Mr. Johnſon was often good-humouredly willing to join in childiſh amuſements, and hated to be left out of any innocent merriment that was going forward. Mr. Murphy always ſaid, he was incomparable at buffoonery; and I verily think, if he had

had good eyes, and a form leſs inflexible, he would have made an admirable mimic.

He certainly rode on Mr. Thrale's old hunter with a good firmneſs, and though he would follow the hounds fifty miles an end ſometimes, would never own himſelf either tired or amuſed. "I have now learned (ſaid he), by hunting, to perceive, that it is no diverſion at all, nor ever takes a man out of himſelf for a moment: the dogs have leſs ſagacity than I could have prevailed on myſelf to ſuppoſe; and the gentlemen often call to me not to ride over them. It is very ſtrange, and very melancholy, that the paucity of human pleaſures ſhould perſuade us ever to call hunting one of them."—He was however proud to be amongſt the ſportſmen; and I think no praiſe ever went ſo cloſe to his heart, as when Mr. Hamilton called out one day upon Bright-

helmſtone Downs, Why Johnſon rides as well, for aught I ſee, as the moſt illiterate fellow in England.

Though Dr. Johnſon owed his very life to air and exerciſe, given him when his organs of reſpiration could ſcarcely play, in the year 1766, yet he ever perſiſted in the notion, that neither of them had any thing to do with health. "People live as long (ſaid he) in Pepper-alley as on Saliſbury-plain; and they live ſo much happier, that an inhabitant of the firſt would, if he turned cottager, ſtarve his underſtanding for want of converſation, and periſh in a ſtate of mental inferiority."

Mr. Johnſon indeed, as he was a very talking man himſelf, had an idea that nothing promoted happineſs ſo much as converſation. A friend's erudition was commended one day as equally deep and ſtrong—"He will not talk Sir (was

the reply), ſo his learning does no good, and his wit, if he has it, gives us no pleaſure: out of all his boaſted ſtores I never heard him force but one word, and that word was *Richard.*" With a contempt not inferior he received the praiſes of a pretty lady's face and behaviour: "She ſays nothing Sir (anſwers Johnſon); a talking blackamoor were better than a white creature who adds nothing to life, and by ſitting down before one thus deſperately ſilent, takes away the confidence one ſhould have in the company of her chair if ſhe were once out of it."—No one was however leſs willing to begin any diſcourſe than himſelf: his friend Mr. Thomas Tyers ſaid, he was like the ghoſts, who never ſpeak till they are ſpoken to: and he liked the expreſſion ſo well, that he often repeated it. He had indeed no neceſſity to lead the ſtream of chat to a favourite channel, that his fulneſs on the ſubject might be ſhewn more clearly, whatever was

the topic; and he uſually left the choice to others. His information beſt enlightened, his argument ſtrengthened, and his wit made it ever remembered. Of him it might have been ſaid, as he often delighted to ſay of Edmund Burke, "that you could not ſtand five minutes with that man beneath a ſhed while it rained, but you muſt be convinced you had been ſtanding with the greateſt man you had ever yet ſeen."

As we had been ſaying one day that no ſubject failed of receiving dignity from the manner in which Mr. Johnſon treated it, a lady at my houſe ſaid, ſhe would make him talk about love; and took her meaſures accordingly, deriding the novels of the day becauſe they treated about love. "It is not (replied our philoſopher) becauſe they treat, as you call it, about love, but becauſe they treat of nothing, that they are deſpicable: we muſt not ridicule a

paſſion which he who never felt never was happy, and he who laughs at never deſerves to feel—a paſſion which has cauſed the change of empires, and the loſs of worlds—a paſſion which has inſpired heroiſm and ſubdued avarice." He thought he had already ſaid too much. "A paſſion, in ſhort (added he, with an altered tone), that conſumes me away for my pretty Fanny here, and ſhe is very cruel (ſpeaking of another lady in the room)." He told us however in the courſe of the ſame chat, how his negro Francis had been eminent for his ſucceſs among the girls. Seeing us all laugh, "I muſt have you know, ladies (ſaid he), that Frank has carried the empire of Cupid further than moſt men. When I was in Lincolnſhire ſo many years ago, he attended me thither; and when we returned home together, I found that a female haymaker had followed him to London for love." Francis was indeed no ſmall favourite with his

maſter, who retained however a prodigious influence over his moſt violent paſſions.

On the birth-day of our eldeſt daughter, and that of our friend Dr. Johnſon, the 17th and 18th of September, we every year made up a little dance and ſupper, to divert our ſervants and their friends, putting the ſummer-houſe into their hands for the two evenings, to fill with acquaintance and merriment. Francis and his white wife were invited of courſe. She was eminently pretty, and he was jealous, as my maids told me. On the firſt of theſe days amuſements (I know not what year) Frank took offence at ſome attentions paid his Deſdemona, and walked away next morning to London in wrath. His maſter and I driving the ſame road an hour after, overtook him. "What is the matter, child (ſays Dr. Johnſon), that you leave Streatham to-day? *Art ſick?*" He is jealous (whiſpered I). "Are you jealous

of your wife, you ſtupid blockhead (cries out his maſter in another tone)?" The fellow heſitated; and, *To be ſure Sir*, I *don't quite approve Sir*, was the ſtammering reply. "Why, what do they *do* to her, man? do the footmen kiſs her?" No Sir, no!—Kiſs my *wife Sir!—I hope not Sir*. "Why, what *do* they do to her, my lad?" Why nothing Sir, I'm ſure Sir. "Why then go back directly and dance you dog, do; and let's hear no more of ſuch empty lamentations." I believe however that Francis was ſcarcely as much the object of Mr. Johnſon's perſonal kindneſs, as the repreſentative of Dr. Bathurſt, for whoſe ſake he would have loved any body, or any thing.

When he ſpoke of negroes, he always appeared to think them of a race naturally inferior, and made few exceptions in favour of his own; yet whenever diſputes aroſe in his houſehold among the many odd inhabitants of which it

conſiſted, he always ſided with Francis againſt the others, whom he ſuſpected (not unjuſtly, I believe) of greater malignity. It ſeems at once vexatious and comical to reflect, that the diſſentions thoſe people choſe to live conſtantly in, diſtreſſed and mortified him exceedingly. He really was oftentimes afraid of going home, becauſe he was ſo ſure to be met at the door with numberleſs complaints; and he uſed to lament pathetically to me, and to Mr. Saſtres the Italian maſter, who was much his favourite, that they made his life miſerable from the impoſſibility he found of making theirs happy, when every favour he beſtowed on one was wormwood to the reſt. If, however, I ventured to blame their ingratitude, and condemn their conduct, he would inſtantly ſet about ſoftening the one and juſtifying the other; and finiſhed commonly by telling me, that I knew not how to make

allowances for ſituations I never experienced.

> To thee no reaſon who know'ſt only good,
> But evil haſt not try'd. MILTON.

Dr. Johnſon knew how to be merry with mean people too, as well as to be ſad with them; he loved the lower ranks of humanity with a real affection: and though his talents and learning kept him always in the ſphere of upper life, yet he never loſt ſight of the time when he and they ſhared pain and pleaſure in common. A borough election once ſhewed me his toleration of boiſterous mirth, and his content in the company of people whom one would have thought at firſt ſight little calculated for his ſociety. A rough fellow one day on ſuch an occaſion, a hatter by trade, ſeeing Mr. Johnſon's beaver in a ſtate of decay, ſeized it ſuddenly with one hand, and clapping him on the back with the

other; Ah, Maſter Johnſon (ſays he), this is no time to be thinking about *hats*. "No, no, Sir (replies our Doctor in a cheerful tone), hats are of no uſe now, as you ſay, except to throw up in the air and huzza with;" accompanying his words with the true election halloo.

But it was never againſt people of coarſe life that his contempt was expreſſed, while poverty of ſentiment in men who conſidered themſelves to be company for *the parlour*, as he called it, was what he would not bear. A very ignorant young fellow, who had plagued us all for nine or ten months, died at laſt conſumptive: "I think (ſaid Mr. Johnſon when he heard the news), I am afraid, I ſhould have been more concerned for the death of the *dog*; but—— (heſitating a while) I am not wrong now in all this, for the dog acted up to his character on every occaſion that we know; but that dunce of a fellow

helped forward the general diſgrace of humanity." Why dear Sir (ſaid I), how odd you are! you have often ſaid the lad was not capable of receiving further inſtruction. "He was (replied the Doctor) like a corked bottle, with a drop of dirty water in it, to be ſure; one might pump upon it for ever without the ſmalleſt effect; but when every method to open and clean it had been tried, you would not have me grieve that the bottle was broke at laſt."

This was the ſame youth who told us he had been reading Lucius Florus; *Florus Delphini* was the phraſe; and my mother (ſaid he) thought it had ſomething to do with Delphos; but of that I know nothing. Who founded Rome then (enquired Mr. Thrale)? The lad replied, Romulus. And who ſucceeded Romulus (ſaid I)? A long pauſe, and apparently diſtreſsful heſitation, followed the difficult queſtion. "Why will you aſk him in terms that he does not com-

prehend (ſaid Mr. Johnſon enraged)? You might as well bid him tell you who phlebotomiſed Romulus. This fellow's dulneſs is elaſtic (continued he), and all we do is but like kicking at a wool-ſack."

The pains he took however to obtain the young man more patient inſtructors, were many, and oftentimes repeated. He was put under the care of a clergyman in a diſtant province; and Mr. Johnſon uſed both to write and talk to his friend concerning his education. It was on that occaſion that I remember his ſaying, "A boy ſhould never be ſent to Eton or Weſtminſter ſchool before he is twelve years old at leaſt; for if in his years of babyhood he 'ſcapes that general and tranſcendent knowledge without which life is perpetually put to a ſtand, he will never get it at a public ſchool, where if he does not learn Latin and Greek, he learns nothing." Mr. Johnſon often ſaid, "that

there was too much ſtreſs laid upon literature as indiſpenſably neceſſary: there is ſurely no need that every body ſhould be a ſcholar, no call that every one ſhould ſquare the circle. Our manner of teaching (ſaid he) cramps and warps many a mind, which if left more at liberty would have been reſpectable in ſome way, though perhaps not in that. We lop our trees, and prune them, and pinch them about (he would ſay), and nail them tight up to the wall, while a good ſtandard is at laſt the only thing for bearing healthy fruit, though it commonly begins later. Let the people learn neceſſary knowledge; let them learn to count their fingers, and to count their money, before they are caring for the claſſics; for (ſays Mr. Johnſon) though I do not quite agree with the proverb, that *Nullum numen abeſt ſi ſit prudentia*, yet we may very well ſay, that *Nullum numen adeſt—ni ſit prudentia.*"

We had been viſiting at a lady's houſe, whom as we returned ſome of the company ridiculed for her ignorance: "She is not ignorant (ſaid he), I believe, of any thing ſhe has been taught, or of any thing ſhe is deſirous to know; and I ſuppoſe if one wanted a little *run tea*, ſhe might be a proper perſon enough to apply to."

When I relate theſe various inſtances of contemptuous behaviour ſhewn to a variety of people, I am aware that thoſe who till now have heard little of Mr. Johnſon will here cry out againſt his pride and his ſeverity; yet I have been as careful as I could to tell them, that all he did was gentle, if all he ſaid was rough. Had I given anecdotes of his actions inſtead of his words, we ſhould I am ſure have had nothing on record but acts of virtue differently modified, as different occaſions called that virtue forth: and among all the nine biographical eſſays or performances which I

have heard will at laſt be written about dear Dr. Johnſon, no mean or wretched, no wicked or even ſlightly culpable action will I truſt be found, to produce and put in the ſcale againſt a life of ſeventy years, ſpent in the uniform practice of every moral excellence and every Chriſtian perfection, ſave humility alone, ſays a critic, but that I think *muſt* be excepted. He was not however wanting even in that to a degree ſeldom attained by man, when the duties of piety or charity called it forth.

Lowly towards God, and docile towards the church; implicit in his belief of the goſpel, and ever reſpectful towards the people appointed to preach it; tender of the unhappy, and affectionate to the poor, let no one haſtily condemn as proud, a character which may perhaps ſomewhat juſtly be cenſured as arrogant. It muſt however be remembered again, that even this arrogance was never ſhewn without ſome intention,

immediate or remote, of mending ſome fault or conveying ſome inſtruction. Had I meant to make a panegyric on Mr. Johnſon's well-known excellencies, I ſhould have told his deeds only, not his words — ſincerely proteſting, that as I never ſaw him once do a wrong thing, ſo we had accuſtomed ourſelves to look upon him almoſt as an excepted being; and I ſhould as much have expected injuſtice from Socrates or impiety from Paſchal, as the ſlighteſt deviation from truth and goodneſs in any tranſaction one might be engaged in with Samuel Johnſon. His attention to veracity was without equal or example: and when I mentioned Clariſſa as a perfect character; "On the contrary (ſaid he), you may obſerve there is always ſomething which ſhe prefers to truth. Fielding's Amelia was the moſt pleaſing heroine of all the romances (he ſaid); but that vile broken noſe never cured, ruined the ſale of perhaps the only book, which being printed

off betimes one morning, a new edition was called for before night."

Mr. Johnſon's knowledge of literary hiſtory was extenſive and ſurpriſing: he knew every adventure of every book you could name almoſt, and was exceedingly pleaſed with the opportunity which writing the Poets Lives gave him to diſplay it. He loved to be ſet at work, and was ſorry when he came to the end of the buſineſs he was about. I do not feel ſo myſelf with regard to theſe ſheets: a fever which has preyed on me while I wrote them over for the preſs, will perhaps leſſen my power of doing well the firſt, and probably the laſt work I ſhould ever have thought of preſenting to the Public. I could doubtleſs wiſh ſo to conclude it, as at leaſt to ſhew my zeal for my friend, whoſe life, as I once had the honour and happineſs of being uſeful to, I ſhould wiſh to record a few particular traits of, that thoſe who read

ſhould emulate his goodneſs; but ſeeing the neceſſity of making even virtue and learning ſuch as *his* agreeable, that all ſhould be warned againſt ſuch coarſeneſs of manners, as drove even from *him* thoſe who loved, honoured, and eſteemed him. His wife's daughter, Mrs. Lucy Porter of Litchfield, whoſe veneration for his perſon and character has ever been the greateſt poſſible, being oppoſed one day in converſation by a clergyman who came often to her houſe, and feeling ſomewhat offended, cried out ſuddenly, Why, Mr. Pearſon, ſaid ſhe, you are juſt like Dr. Johnſon, I think: I do not mean that you are a man of the greateſt capacity in all the world like Dr. Johnſon, but that you contradict one every word one ſpeaks, juſt like him.

Mr. Johnſon told me the ſtory: he was preſent at the giving of the reproof. It was however obſervable that with all his odd ſeverity, he could not keep even

indifferent people from teizing him with unaccountable confeſſions of ſilly conduct which one would think they would ſcarcely have had inclination to reveal even to their tendereſt and moſt intimate companions; and it was from theſe unaccountable volunteers in ſincerity that he learned to warn the world againſt follies little known, and ſeldom thought on by other moraliſts.

Much of his eloquence, and much of his logic have I heard him uſe to prevent men from making vows on trivial occaſions; and when he ſaw a perſon oddly perplexed about a ſlight difficulty, "Let the man alone (he would ſay), and torment him no more about it; there is a vow in the caſe, I am convinced; but is it not very ſtrange that people ſhould be neither afraid nor aſhamed of bringing in God Almighty thus at every turn between themſelves and their dinner?" When I aſked what ground he had for ſuch

imaginations, he informed me, "That a young lady once told him in confidence, that ſhe could never perſuade herſelf to be dreſſed againſt the bell rung for dinner, till ſhe had made a vow to heaven that ſhe would never more be abſent from the family meals."

The ſtrangeſt applications in the world were certainly made from time to time towards Mr. Johnſon, who by that means had an inexhauſtible fund of anecdote, and could, if he pleaſed, tell the moſt aſtoniſhing ſtories of human folly and human weakneſs that ever were confided to any man not a confeſſor by profeſſion.

One day when he was in a humour to record ſome of them, he told us the following tale: "A perſon (ſaid he) had for theſe laſt five weeks often called at my door, but would not leave his name, or other meſſage; but that he wiſhed to ſpeak with me. At laſt we met, and he told me that he was oppreſſed by

ſcruples of conſcience: I blamed him gently for not applying, as the rules of our church direct, to his pariſh prieſt or other diſcreet clergyman; when, after ſome compliments on his part, he told me, that he was clerk to a very eminent trader, at whoſe warehouſes much buſineſs conſiſted in packing goods in order to go abroad: that he was often tempted to take paper and packthread enough for his own uſe, and that he had indeed done ſo ſo often, that he could recollect no time when he ever had bought any for himſelf.—But probably (ſaid I), your maſter was wholly indifferent with regard to ſuch trivial emoluments; you had better aſk for it at once, and ſo take your trifles with conſent.—Oh, Sir! replies the viſitor, my maſter bid me have as much as I pleaſed, and was half angry when I talked to him about it.—Then pray Sir (ſaid I), teize me no more about ſuch airy nothings;—and was going on to be very angry, when I recollected

that the fellow might be mad perhaps; ſo I aſked him, When he left the counting-houſe of an evening?—At ſeven o'clock, Sir.—And when do you go to-bed, Sir?—At twelve o'clock.—Then (replied I) I have at leaſt learned thus much by my new acquaintance;—that five hours of the four-and-twenty unemployed are enough for a man to go mad in; ſo I would adviſe you Sir, to ſtudy algebra, if you are not an adept already in it: your head would get leſs *muddy*, and you will leave off tormenting your neighbours about paper and packthread, while we all live together in a world that is burſting with ſin and ſorrow. It is perhaps needleſs to add, that this viſitor came no more."

Mr. Johnſon had indeed a real abhorrence of a perſon that had ever before him treated a little thing like a great one: and he quoted this ſcrupulous gentleman with his packthread very often, in ridicule of a friend

who, looking out on Streatham Common from our windows one day, lamented the enormous wickedneſs of the times, becauſe ſome bird-catchers were buſy there one fine Sunday morning. "While half the Chriſtian world is permitted (ſaid he) to dance and ſing, and celebrate Sunday as a day of feſtivity, how comes your puritanical ſpirit ſo offended with frivolous and empty deviations from exactneſs. Whoever loads life with unneceſſary ſcruples, Sir (continued he), provokes the attention of others on his conduct, and incurs the cenſure of ſingularity without reaping the reward of ſuperior virtue."

I muſt not, among the anecdotes of Dr. Johnſon's life, omit to relate a thing that happened to him one day, which he told me of himſelf. As he was walking along the Strand a gentleman ſtepped out of ſome neighbouring tavern, with his napkin in his hand and no hat, and ſtopping him as civilly as he could—I

beg your pardon, Sir; but you are Dr. Johnſon, I believe. "Yes, Sir." We have a wager depending on your reply: Pray, Sir, is it irrèparable or irrepàirable that one ſhould ſay? "The *laſt* I think, Sir (anſwered Dr. Johnſon), for the adjective ought to follow the verb; but you had better conſult my dictionary than me, for that was the reſult of more thought than you will now give me time for." No, no, replied the gentleman gaily, the book I have no certainty at all of; but here is the *author*, to whom I referred: Is he not, Sir? to a friend with him: I have won my twenty guineas quite fairly, and am much obliged to you, Sir; ſo ſhaking Mr. Johnſon kindly by the hand, he went back to finiſh his dinner or deſert.

Another ſtrange thing he told me once which there was no danger of forgetting: how a young gentleman called on him one morning, and told him that

his father having, juſt before his death, dropped ſuddenly into the enjoyment of an ample fortune, he, the ſon, was willing to qualify himſelf for genteel ſociety by adding ſome literature to his other endowments, and wiſhed to be put in an eaſy way of obtaining it. Johnſon recommended the univerſity; "for you read Latin, Sir, with *facility*." I read it a little to be ſure, Sir. "But do you read it *with facility*, I ſay?" Upon my word, Sir, I do not very well know, but I rather believe not. Mr. Johnſon now began to recommend other branches of ſcience, when he found languages at ſuch an immeaſurable diſtance, and adviſing him to ſtudy natural hiſtory, there aroſe ſome talk about animals, and their diviſions into oviparous and viviparous; And the cat here, Sir, ſaid the youth who wiſhed for inſtruction, pray in which claſs is ſhe? Our doctor's patience and deſire of doing good began now to give way to the natural rough-

neſs of his temper. "You would do well (ſaid he) to look for ſome perſon to be always about you, Sir, who is capable of explaining ſuch matters, and not come to us (there were ſome literary friends preſent as I recollect) to know whether the cat lays eggs or not: get a diſcreet man to keep you company, there are ſo many who would be glad of your table and fifty pounds a year." The young gentleman retired, and in leſs than a week informed his friends that he had fixed on a preceptor to whom no objections could be made; but when he named as ſuch one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed characters in our age or nation, Mr. Johnſon fairly gave himſelf up to an honeſt burſt of laughter; and ſeeing this youth at ſuch a ſurpriſing diſtance from common knowledge of the world, or of any thing in it, deſired to ſee his viſitor no more.

He had not much better luck with two boys that he uſed to tell of, to

whom he had taught the claſſics, "ſo that (he ſaid) they were no incompetent or mean ſcholars:" it was neceſſary however that ſomething more familiar ſhould be known, and he bid them read the hiſtory of England. After a few months had elapſed he aſked them, "If they could recollect who firſt deſtroyed the monaſteries in our iſland?" One modeſtly replied, that he did not know; the other ſaid, *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Of the truth of ſtories which ran currently about the town concerning Dr. Johnſon, it was impoſſible to be certain, unleſs one aſked him himſelf; and what he told, or ſuffered to be told before his face without contradicting, has every poſſible mark I think of real and genuine authenticity. I made one day very minute enquiries about the tale of his knocking down the famous Tom Oſborne with his own Dictionary in the man's own houſe. And how was that affair, in earneſt? do tell me, Mr. John-

ſon? "There is nothing to tell, deareſt Lady, but that he was inſolent and I beat him, and that he was a blockhead and told of it, which I ſhould never have done; ſo the blows have been multiplying, and the wonder thickening for all theſe years, as Thomas was never a favourite with the Public. I have beat many a fellow, but the reſt had the wit to hold their tongues."

I have heard Mr. Murphy relate a very ſingular ſtory, while he was preſent, greatly to the credit of his uncommon ſkill and knowledge of life and manners: When firſt the Ramblers came out in ſeparate numbers, as they were the objects of attention to multitudes of people, they happened, as it ſeems, particularly to attract the notice of a ſociety who met every Saturday evening during the ſummer at Rumford in Eſſex, and were known by the name of The Bowling-green club. Theſe men ſeeing one day the

character of Leviculus the fortune-hunter, or Tetrica the old maid: another day ſome account of a perſon who ſpent his life in hoping for a legacy, or of him who is always prying into other folks affairs, began ſure enough to think they were betrayed; and that ſome of the coterie ſate down to divert himſelf by giving to the Public the portrait of all the reſt. Filled with wrath againſt the traitor of Rumford, one of them reſolved to write to the printer and enquire the author's name; Samuel Johnſon, was the reply. No more was neceſſary; Samuel Johnſon was the name of the curate, and ſoon did each begin to load him with reproaches for turning his friends into ridicule in a manner ſo cruel and unprovoked. In vain did the guiltleſs curate proteſt his innocence; one was ſure that Aliger meant Mr. Twigg, and that Cupidus was but another name for neighbour Baggs: till the poor parſon, unable to contend any

longer, rode to London, and brought them full ſatisfaction concerning the writer, who from his own knowledge of general manners, quickened by a vigorous and warm imagination, had happily delineated, though unknown to himſelf, the members of the Bowling-green Club.

Mr. Murphy likewiſe uſed to tell before Dr. Johnſon, of the firſt time *they* met, and the occaſion of their meeting, which he related thus: That being in thoſe days engaged in a periodical paper, he found himſelf at a friend's houſe out of town; and not being diſpoſed to loſe pleaſure for the ſake of buſineſs, wiſhed rather to content his bookſeller by ſending ſome unſtudied eſſay to London by the ſervant, than deny himſelf the company of his acquaintance, and drive away to his chambers for the purpoſe of writing ſomething more correct. He therefore

took up a French *Journal Literaire* that lay about the room, and tranſlating ſomething he liked from it, ſent it away without further examination. Time however diſcovered that he had tranſlated from the French a Rambler of Johnſon's, which had been but a month before taken from the Engliſh; and thinking it right to make him his perſonal excuſes, he went next day, and found our friend all covered with ſoot like a chimney-ſweeper, in a little room, with an intolerable heat and ſtrange ſmell, as if he had been acting Lungs in the Alchymiſt, making *æther*. "Come, come (ſays Dr. Johnſon), dear Mur, the ſtory is black enough now; and it was a very happy day for me that brought you firſt to my houſe, and a very happy miſtake about the Ramblers."

Dr. Johnſon was always exceeding fond of chemiſtry; and we made up a ſort of laboratory at Streatham one

ſummer, and diverted ourſelves with drawing eſſences and colouring liquors. But the danger Mr. Thrale found his friend in one day when I was driven to London, and he had got the children and ſervants round him to ſee ſome experiments performed, put an end to all our entertainment; ſo well was the maſter of the houſe perſuaded, that his ſhort ſight would have been his deſtruction in a moment, by bringing him cloſe to a fierce and violent flame. Indeed it was a perpetual miracle that he did not ſet himſelf on fire reading a-bed, as was his conſtant cuſtom, when exceedingly unable even to keep clear of miſchief with our beſt help; and accordingly the fore-top of all his wigs were burned by the candle down to the very net-work. Mr. Thrale's valet-de-chambre, for that reaſon, kept one always in his own hands, with which he met him at the parlour-door when the bell had called him down to dinner, and

as he went up ſtairs to ſleep in the afternoon, the ſame man conſtantly followed him with another.

Future experiments in chemiſtry however were too dangerous, and Mr. Thrale inſiſted that we ſhould do no more towards finding the philoſophers ſtone.

Mr. Johnſon's amuſements were thus reduced to the pleaſures of converſation merely: and what wonder that he ſhould have an avidity for the ſole delight he was able to enjoy? No man converſed ſo well as he on every ſubject; no man ſo acutely diſcerned the reaſon of every fact, the motive of every action, the end of every deſign. He was indeed often pained by the ignorance or cauſeleſs wonder of thoſe who knew leſs than himſelf, though he ſeldom drove them away with apparent ſcorn, unleſs he thought they added preſumption to ſtupidity: And it was impoſſible not to

laugh at the patience he ſhewed, when a Welch parſon of mean abilities, though a good heart, ſtruck with reverence at the ſight of Dr. Johnſon, whom he had heard of as the greateſt man living, could not find any words to anſwer his inquiries concerning a motto round ſomebody's arms which adorned a tomb-ſtone in Ruabon church-yard. If I remember right the words were,

Heb Dw, Heb Dym,
Dw o' diggon.

And though of no very difficult conſtruction, the gentleman ſeemed wholly confounded, and unable to explain them; till Mr. Johnſon having picked out the meaning by little and little, ſaid to the man, "*Heb* is a prepoſition, I believe Sir, is it not?" My countryman recovering ſome ſpirits upon the ſudden queſtion, cried out, So I humbly preſume Sir, very comically.

Stories of humour do not tell well in books; and what made impreſſion on the friends who heard a jeſt, will ſeldom much delight the diſtant acquaintance or ſullen critic who reads it. The cork model of Paris is not more deſpicable as a reſemblance of a great city, than this book, *levior cortice*, as a ſpecimen of Johnſon's character. Yet every body naturally likes to gather little ſpecimens of the rarities found in a great country; and could I carry home from Italy ſquare pieces of all the curious marbles which are the juſt glory of this ſurpriſing part of the world, I could ſcarcely contrive perhaps to arrange them ſo meanly as not to gain ſome attention from the reſpect due to the places they once belonged to.—Such a piece of motley Moſaic work will theſe Anecdotes inevitably make: but let the reader remember that he was promiſed nothing better, and ſo be as contented as he can.

An Iriſh trader at our houſe one day heard Dr. Johnſon launch out into very great and greatly deſerved praiſes of Mr. Edmund Burke: delighted to find his countryman ſtood ſo high in the opinion of a man he had been told ſo much of, Sir (ſaid he), give *me* leave to tell ſomething of Mr. Burke now. We were all ſilent, and the honeſt Hibernian began to relate how Mr. Burke went to ſee the collieries in a diſtant province; and he would go down into the bowels of the earth (in a bag), and he would examine every thing: he went in a bag Sir, and ventured his health and his life for knowledge; but he took care of his clothes, that they ſhould not be ſpoiled, for he went down in a bag. "Well Sir (ſays Mr. Johnſon good-humouredly), if our friend Mund ſhould die in any of theſe hazardous exploits, you and I would write his life and panegyric together; and your chapter of it

ſhould be entitled thus: *Burke in a Bag.*"

He had always a very great perſonal regard and particular affection for Mr. Edmund Burke, as well as an eſteem difficult for me to repeat, though for him only eaſy to expreſs. And when at the end of the year 1774 the general election called us all different ways, and broke up the delightful ſociety in which we had ſpent ſome time at Beconsfield, Dr. Johnſon ſhook the hoſpitable maſter of the houſe kindly by the hand, and ſaid, "Farewell my dear Sir, and remember that I wiſh you all the ſucceſs which ought to be wiſhed you, which can poſſibly be wiſhed you indeed—*by an honeſt man.*"

I muſt here take leave to obſerve, that in giving little memoirs of Mr. Johnſon's behaviour and converſation,

ſuch as I ſaw and heard it, my book lies under manifeſt diſadvantages, compared with theirs, who having ſeen him in various ſituations, and obſerved his conduct in numberleſs caſes, are able to throw ſtronger and more brilliant lights upon his character. Virtues are like ſhrubs, which yield their ſweets in different manners according to the circumſtances which ſurround them: and while generoſity of ſoul ſcatters its fragrance like the honeyſuckle, and delights the ſenſes of many occaſional paſſengers, who feel the pleaſure, and half wonder how the breeze has blown it from ſo far, the more ſullen but not leſs valuable myrtle waits like fortitude to diſcover its excellence, till the hand arrives that will *cruſh* it, and force out that perfume whoſe durability well compenſates the difficulty of production.

I ſaw Mr. Johnſon in none but a tranquil uniform ſtate, paſſing the even-

ing of his life among friends, who loved, honoured, and admired him: I ſaw none of the things he did, except ſuch acts of charity as have been often mentioned in this book, and ſuch writings as are univerſally known. What he ſaid is all I can relate; and from what he ſaid, thoſe who think it worth while to read theſe Anecdotes, muſt be contented to gather his character. Mine is a mere *candle-light* picture of his latter days, where every thing falls in dark ſhadow except the face, the index of the mind; but even that is ſeen unfavourably, and with a paleneſs beyond what nature gave it.

When I have told how many follies Dr. Johnſon knew of others, I muſt not omit to mention with how much fidelity he would always have kept them concealed, could they of whom he knew the abſurdities have been contented, in the common phraſe, to

keep their own counſel. But returning home one day from dining at the chaplain's table, he told me, that Dr. Goldſmith had given a very comical and unneceſſarily exact recital there, of his own feelings when his play was hiſſed; telling the company how he went indeed to the Literary Club at night, and chatted gaily among his friends, as if nothing had happened amiſs; that to impreſs them ſtill more forcibly with an idea of his magnanimity, he even ſung his favourite ſong about an old woman toſſed in a blanket ſeventeen times as high as the moon; but all this while I was ſuffering horrid tortures (ſaid he), and verily believe that if I had put a bit into my mouth it would have ſtrangled me on the ſpot, I was ſo exceſſively ill; but I made more noiſe than uſual to cover all that, and ſo they never perceived my not eating, nor I believe at all imaged to themſelves the anguiſh of my heart: but when all were gone except Johnſon

here, I burſt out a-crying, and even ſwore by —— that I would never write again. "All which, Doctor (ſays Mr. Johnſon, amazed at his odd frankneſs), I thought had been a ſecret between you and me! and I am ſure I would not have ſaid any thing about it for the world. Now ſee (repeated he when he told the ſtory) what a figure a man makes who thus unaccountably chuſes to be the frigid narrator of his own diſgrace. *Il volto ſciolto, ed i penſieri ſtretti*, was a proverb made on purpoſe for ſuch mortals, to keep people, if poſſible, from being thus the heralds of their own ſhame: for what compaſſion can they gain by ſuch ſilly narratives? No man ſhould be expected to ſympathiſe with the ſorrows of vanity. If then you are mortified by any ill uſage, whether real or ſuppoſed, keep at leaſt the account of ſuch mortifications to yourſelf, and forbear to proclaim how meanly you are thought on by others, unleſs you deſire to be meanly thought of by all."

The little hiſtory of another friend's ſuperfluous ingenuity will contribute to introduce a ſimilar remark. He had a daughter of about fourteen years old, as I remember, fat and clumſy: and though the father adored, and deſired others to adore her, yet being aware perhaps that ſhe was not what the French call *paitrie des graces*, and thinking I ſuppoſe that the old maxim, of beginning to laugh at yourſelf firſt where you have any thing ridiculous about you, was a good one, he comically enough called his girl *Trundle* when he ſpoke of her; and many who bore neither of them any ill-will felt diſpoſed to laugh at the happineſs of the appellation. "See now (ſays Dr. Johnſon) what haſte people are in to be hooted. Nobody ever thought of this fellow nor of his daughter, could he but have been quiet himſelf, and forborne to call the eyes of the world on his dowdy and her deformity. But it teaches one to ſee at leaſt, that if no-

body elſe will nickname one's children, the parents will e'en do it themſelves."

All this held true in matters to Mr. Johnſon of more ſerious conſequence. When Sir Joſhua Reynolds had painted his portrait looking into the ſlit of his pen, and holding it almoſt cloſe to his eye, as was his general cuſtom, he felt diſpleaſed, and told me, "he would not be known by poſterity for his *defects* only, let Sir Joſhua do his worſt." I ſaid in reply, that Reynolds had no ſuch difficulties about himſelf, and that he might obſerve the picture which hung up in the room where we were talking, repreſented Sir Joſhua holding his ear in his hand to catch the ſound. "He may paint himſelf as deaf if he chuſes (replied Johnſon); but I will not be *blinking Sam.*"

It is chiefly for the ſake of evincing the regularity and ſteadineſs of Mr. Johnſon's mind that I have given theſe tri-

ſling memoirs, to ſhew that his ſoul was not different from that of another perſon, but, as it was, greater; and to give thoſe who did not know him a juſt idea of his acquieſcence in what we call vulgar prejudices, and of his extreme diſtance from thoſe notions which the world has agreed, I know not very well why, to call romantic. It is indeed obſervable in his preface to Shakeſpeare, that while other critics expatiate on the creative powers and vivid imagination of that matchleſs poet, Dr. Johnſon commends him for giving ſo juſt a repreſentation of human manners, "that from his ſcenes a hermit might eſtimate the value of ſociety, and a confeſſor predict the progreſs of the paſſions." I have not the book with me here, but am pretty ſure that ſuch is his expreſſion.

The general and conſtant advice he gave too, when conſulted about the choice of a wife, a profeſſion, or what-

ever influences a man's particular and immediate happineſs, was always to reject no poſitive good from fears of its contrary conſequences. "Do not (ſaid he) forbear to marry a beautiful woman if you can find ſuch, out of a fancy that ſhe will be leſs conſtant than an ugly one; or condemn yourſelf to the ſociety of coarſeneſs and vulgarity for fear of the expences or other dangers of elegance and perſonal charms, which have been always acknowledged as a poſitive good, and for the want of which there ſhould be always given ſome weighty compenſation. I have however (continued Mr. Johnſon) ſeen ſome prudent fellows who forbore to connect themſelves with beauty leſt coquetry ſhould be near, and with wit or birth leſt inſolence ſhould lurk behind them, till they have been forced by their diſcretion to linger life away in taſteleſs ſtupidity, and chuſe to count the moments by remembrance of pain inſtead of enjoyment of pleaſure."

When profeſſions were talked of, "Scorn (ſaid Mr. Johnſon) to put your behaviour under the dominion of canters; never think it clever to call phyſic a mean ſtudy, or law a dry one; or aſk a baby of ſeven years old which way *his genius* leads him, when we all know that a boy of ſeven years old has no *genius* for any thing except a peg-top and an apple-pye; but fix on ſome buſineſs where much money may be got and little virtue riſqued: follow that buſineſs ſteadily, and do not live as Roger Aſcham ſays the wits do, *Men know not how; and at laſt die obſcurely, men mark not where.*"

Dr. Johnſon had indeed a veneration for the voice of mankind beyond what moſt people will own; and as he liberally confeſſed that all his own diſappointments proceeded from himſelf, he hated to hear others complain of general injuſtice. I remember when lamentation was made of the neg-

lect ſhewed to Jeremiah Markland, a great philologiſt as ſome one ventured to call him—"He is a ſcholar undoubtedly Sir (replied Dr. Johnſon), but remember that he would run from the world, and that it is not the world's buſineſs to run after him. I hate a fellow whom pride, or cowardice, or lazineſs drives into a corner, and does nothing when he is there but ſit and *growl*; let him come out as I do, and *bark*. The world (added he) is chiefly unjuſt and ungenerous in this, that all are ready to encourage a man who once talks of leaving it, and few things do really provoke me more, than to hear people prate of retirement, when they have neither ſkill to diſcern their own motives, or penetration to eſtimate the conſequences: but while a fellow is active to gain either power or wealth (continued he), every body produces ſome hindrance to his advancement, ſome ſage remark, or ſome unfavourable prediction; but let him once ſay ſlightly, I have had

enough of this troubleſome buſtling world, 'tis time to leave it now: Ah, dear Sir! cries the firſt old acquaintance he meets, I am glad to find you in this happy diſpoſition: yes, dear friend! *do* retire and think of nothing but your own eaſe: there's Mr. William will find it a pleaſure to ſettle all your accounts and relieve you from the fatigue; Miſs Dolly makes the charmingeſt chicken broth in the world, and the cheeſecakes we eat of her's once, how good they were: I will be coming every two or three days myſelf to chat with you in a quiet way; *ſo ſnug!* and tell you how matters go upon 'Change, or in the Houſe, or according to the blockhead's firſt purſuits, whether lucrative or politic, which thus he leaves; and lays himſelf down a voluntary prey to his own ſenſuality and ſloth, while the ambition and avarice of the nephews and nieces, with their raſcally adherents and coadjutors, reap the advantage, while they fatten their fool."

As the votaries of retirement had little of Mr. Johnſon's applauſe, unleſs that he knew that the motives were merely devotional, and unleſs he was convinced that their rituals were accompanied by a mortified ſtate of the body, the ſole proof of their ſincerity which he would admit, as a compenſation for ſuch fatigue as a worldly life of care and activity requires; ſo of the various ſtates and conditions of humanity, he deſpiſed none more I think than the man who marries for a maintenance: and of a friend who made his alliance on no higher principles, he ſaid once, "Now has that fellow (it was a nobleman of whom we were ſpeaking) at length obtained a certainty of three meals a day, and for that certainty, like his brother dog in the fable, he will get his neck galled for life with a collar."

That poverty was an evil to be avoided by all honeſt means however, no man was

more ready to avow: concealed poverty particularly, which he ſaid was the general corroſive that deſtroyed the peace of almoſt every family; to which no evening perhaps ever returned without ſome new project for hiding the ſorrows and dangers of the next day. "Want of money (ſays Dr. Johnſon) is ſometimes concealed under pretended avarice, and ſly hints of averſion to part with it; ſometimes under ſtormy anger, and affectation of boundleſs rage; but oftener ſtill under a ſhew of thoughtleſs extravagance and gay neglect—while to a penetrating eye, none of theſe wretched veils ſuffice to keep the cruel truth from being ſeen. Poverty is *hic et ubique* (ſays he), and if you do ſhut the jade out of the door, ſhe will always contrive in ſome manner to poke her pale lean face in at the window."

I have mentioned before, that old age had very little of Mr. Johnſon's reve-

rence: "a man commonly grew wickeder as he grew older (he ſaid), at leaſt he but changed the vices of youth; headſtrong paſſion and wild temerity, for treacherous caution, and deſire to circumvent. I am always (ſaid he) on the young people's ſide, when there is a diſpute between them and the old ones: for you have at leaſt a chance for virtue till age has withered its very root." While we were talking, my mother's ſpaniel, whom he never loved, ſtole our toaſt and butter; Fye Belle! ſaid I, you uſed to be upon honour: "Yes Madam (replies Johnſon), *but Belle grows old.*" His reaſon for hating the dog was, "becauſe ſhe was a profeſſed favourite (he ſaid), and becauſe her Lady ordered her from time to time to be waſhed and combed; a fooliſh trick (ſaid he) and an aſſumption of ſuperiority that every one's nature revolts at; ſo becauſe one muſt not wiſh ill to the Lady in ſuch caſes (continued he), one curſes the

cur." The truth is, Belle was not well behaved, and being a large ſpaniel, was troubleſome enough at dinner with frequent ſolicitations to be fed. "This animal (ſaid Dr. Johnſon one day) would have been of extraordinary merit and value in the ſtate of Lycurgus; for ſhe condemns one to the exertion of perpetual vigilance."

He had indeed that ſtrong averſion felt by all the lower ranks of people towards four-footed companions very completely, notwithſtanding he had for many years a cat which he called Hodge, that kept always in his room at Fleet-ſtreet; but ſo exact was he not to offend the human ſpecies by ſuperfluous attention to brutes, that when the creature was grown ſick and old, and could eat nothing but oyſters, Mr. Johnſon always went out himſelf to buy Hodge's dinner, that Francis the Black's delicacy might not be hurt, at ſeeing himſelf employed for the convenience of a quadruped.

No one was indeed ſo attentive not to offend in all ſuch ſort of things as Dr. Johnſon; nor ſo careful to maintain the ceremonies of life: and though he told Mr. Thrale once, that he had never ſought to pleaſe till paſt thirty years old, conſidering the matter as hopeleſs, he had been always ſtudious not to make enemies, by apparent preference of himſelf. It happened very comically, that the moment this curious converſation paſt, of which I was a ſilent auditreſs, was in the coach, in ſome diſtant province, either Shropſhire or Derbyſhire I believe; and as ſoon as it was over, Mr. Johnſon took out of his pocket a little book and read, while a gentleman of no ſmall diſtinction for his birth and elegance, ſuddenly rode up to the carriage, and paying us all his proper compliments, was deſirous not to neglect Dr. Johnſon; but obſerving that he did not ſee him, tapt him gently on the ſhoulder—'Tis Mr. Ch--lm--ley, ſays my huſband;—"Well,

Sir! and what if it is Mr. Ch—lm—ley!" ſays the other ſternly, juſt lifting his eyes a moment from his book, and returning to it again with renewed avidity.

He had ſometimes fits of reading very violent; and when he was in earneſt about getting through ſome particular pages, for I have heard him ſay he never read but one book, which he did not conſider as obligatory, through in his whole life (and Lady Mary Wortley's Letters was the book); he would be quite loſt to company, and withdraw all his attention to what he was reading, without the ſmalleſt knowledge or care about the noiſe made round him. His deafneſs made ſuch conduct leſs odd and leſs difficult to him than it would have been to another man; but his adviſing others to take the ſame method, and pull a little book out when they were not entertained with what was going forward in ſociety, ſeemed more likely to advance the growth of ſcience than of

poliſhed manners, for which he always pretended extreme veneration.

Mr. Johnſon indeed always meaſured other people's notions of every thing by his own, and nothing could perſuade him to believe, that the books which he diſliked were agreeable to thouſands, or that air and exerciſe which he deſpiſed were beneficial to the health of other mortals. When poor Smart, ſo well known for his wit and misfortunes, was firſt obliged to be put in private lodgings, a common friend of both lamented in tender terms the neceſſity which had torn ſo pleaſing a companion from their acquaintance—"A madman muſt be confined, Sir," (replies Dr. Johnſon;) but, ſays the other, I am now apprehenſive for his general health, he will loſe the benefit of exerciſe. "Exerciſe! (returns the Doctor) I never heard that he uſed any: he might, for aught I know, walk *to* the alehouſe; but I believe he was always *carried* home again."

It was however unlucky for thoſe who delighted to echo Johnſon's ſentiments, that he would not endure from them to-day, what perhaps he had yeſterday, by his own manner of treating the ſubject, made them fond of repeating; and I fancy Mr. B—— has not forgotten, that though his friend one evening in a gay humour talked in praiſe of wine as one of the bleſſings permitted by heaven, when uſed with moderation, to lighten the load of life, and give men ſtrength to endure it; yet, when in conſequence of ſuch talk *he* thought fit to make a Bacchanalian diſcourſe in its favour, Mr. Johnſon contradicted him ſomewhat roughly as I remember; and when to aſſure himſelf of conqueſt he added theſe words, You muſt allow me, Sir, at leaſt that it produces truth; *in vino veritas*, you know, Sir—" That (replied Mr. Johnſon) would be uſeleſs to a man who knew he was not a liar when he was ſober."

When one talks of giving and taking the lie familiarly, it is impoſſible to forbear recollecting the tranſactions between the editor of Oſſian and the author of the Journey to the Hebrides. It was moſt obſervable to me however, that Mr. Johnſon never bore his antagoniſt the ſlighteſt degree of ill-will. He always kept thoſe quarrels which belonged to him as a writer, ſeparate from thoſe which he had to do with as a man; but I never did hear him ſay in private one malicious word of a public enemy; and of Mr. Macpherſon I once heard him ſpeak reſpectfully, though his reply to the friend who aſked him if *any man living* could have written ſuch a book, is well known, and has been often repeated: "Yes, Sir; many men, many women, and many children."

I enquired of him myſelf if this ſtory was authentic, and he ſaid it was. I made the ſame enquiry concerning his

account of the ſtate of literature in Scotland, which was repeated up and down at one time by every body—" How knowledge was divided among the Scots, like bread in a beſieged town, to every man a mouthful, to no man a bellyful." This ſtory he likewiſe acknowledged, and ſaid beſides, " that ſome officious friend had carried it to Lord Bute, who only anſwered—Well, well! never mind what he ſays—he will have the penſion all one."

Another famous reply to a Scotſman who commended the beauty and dignity of Glaſgow, till Mr. Johnſon ſtopped him by obſerving, " that he probably had never yet ſeen Brentford," was one of the jokes he owned: and ſaid himſelf, " that when a gentleman of that country once mentioned the lovely proſpects common in his nation, he could not help telling him, that the view of the London road was the proſpect in which every Scotſman moſt naturally and moſt rationally delighted."

Mrs. Brook received an anſwer not unlike this, when expatiating on the accumulation of ſublime and beautiful objects, which form the fine proſpect UP the river St. Lawrence in North America; "Come Madam (ſays Dr. Johnſon), confeſs that nothing ever equalled your pleaſure in ſeeing that ſight reverſed; and finding yourſelf looking at the happy proſpect DOWN the river St. Lawrence." The truth is, he hated to hear about proſpects and views, and laying out ground and taſte in gardening: "That was the beſt garden (he ſaid) which produced moſt roots and fruits; and that water was moſt to be prized which contained moſt fiſh." He uſed to laugh at Shenſtone moſt unmercifully for not caring whether there was any thing good to *eat* in the ſtreams he was ſo fond of, "as if (ſays Johnſon) one could fill one's belly with hearing ſoft murmurs, or looking at rough caſcades!"

He loved the ſight of fine foreſt trees however, and deteſted Brighthelmſtone Downs, "becauſe it was a country ſo truly deſolate (he ſaid), that if one had a mind to hang one's ſelf for deſperation at being obliged to live there, it would be difficult to find a tree on which to faſten the rope." Walking in a wood when it rained, was, I think, the only rural image he pleaſed his fancy with; "for (ſays he) after one has gathered the apples in an orchard, one wiſhes them well baked, and removed to a London eating-houſe for enjoyment."

With ſuch notions, who can wonder he paſſed his time uncomfortably enough with us, whom he often complained of for living ſo much in the country; "feeding the chickens (as he ſaid I did) till I ſtarved my own underſtanding. Get however (ſaid he) a book about gardening, and ſtudy it hard, ſince you will paſs your life with birds and flowers, and learn to raiſe the *largeſt* turnips, and

to breed the *biggeſt* fowls." It was vain to aſſure him that the goodneſs of ſuch diſhes did not depend upon their ſize; he laughed at the people who covered their canals with foreign fowls, "when (ſays he) our own geeſe and ganders are twice as large: if we fetched better animals from diſtant nations, there might be ſome ſenſe in the preference; but to get cows from Alderney, or water-fowl from China, only to ſee nature degenerating round one, is a poor ambition indeed."

Nor was Mr. Johnſon more merciful with regard to the amuſements people are contented to call ſuch: "You hunt in the morning (ſays he), and crowd to the public rooms at night, and call it *diverſion*; when your heart knows it is periſhing with poverty of pleaſures, and your wits get blunted for want of ſome other mind to ſharpen them upon. There is in this world no real delight (excepting thoſe of ſenſuality), but ex-

change of ideas in converſation; and whoever has once experienced the full flow of London talk, when he retires to country friendſhips and rural ſports, muſt either be contented to turn baby again and play with the rattle, or he will pine away like a great fiſh in a little pond, and die for want of his uſual food."—" Books without the knowledge of life are uſeleſs (I have heard him ſay); for what ſhould books teach but the art of *living?* To ſtudy manners however only in coffee-houſes, is more than equally imperfect; the minds of men who acquire no ſolid learning, and only exiſt on the daily forage that they pick up by running about, and ſnatching what drops from their neighbours as ignorant as themſelves, will never ferment into any knowledge valuable or durable; but like the light wines we drink in hot countries, pleaſe for the moment though incapable of keeping! In the ſtudy of mankind much will be found to ſwim as

froth, and much muſt ſink as feculence, before the wine can have its effect, and become that nobleſt liquor which rejoices the heart, and gives vigour to the imagination."

I am well aware that I do not, and cannot give each expreſſion of Dr. Johnſon with all its force or all its neatneſs; but I have done my beſt to record ſuch of his maxims, and repeat ſuch of his ſentiments, as may give to thoſe who knew him not, a juſt idea of his character and manner of thinking. To endeavour at adorning, or adding, or ſoftening, or meliorating ſuch anecdotes, by any tricks my inexperienced pen could play, would be weakneſs indeed; worſe than the Frenchman who preſides over the porcelain manufactory at Seve, to whom when ſome Greek vaſes were given him as models, he lamented *la triſteſſe de telles formes*; and endeavoured to aſſiſt them by cluſters of flowers, while flying

Cupids ſerved for the handles of urns originally intended to contain the aſhes of the dead. The miſery is, that I can recollect ſo few anecdotes, and that I have recorded no more axioms of a man whoſe every word merited attention, and whoſe every ſentiment did honour to human nature. Remote from affectation as from error or falſehood, the comfort a reader has in looking over theſe papers, is the certainty that thoſe were *really* the opinions of Johnſon, which are related as ſuch.

Fear of what others may think, is the great cauſe of affectation; and he was not likely to diſguiſe his notions out of cowardice. He hated diſguiſe, and nobody penetrated it ſo readily. I ſhewed him a letter written to a common friend, who was at ſome loſs for the explanation of it: "Whoever wrote it (ſays our Doctor) could, if he choſe it, make himſelf underſtood; but 'tis the letter of an

embarraſſed man, Sir;" and ſo the event proved it to be.

Myſterioufneſs in trifles offended him on every ſide: "it commonly ended in guilt (he ſaid); for thoſe who begin by concealment of innocent things, will ſoon have ſomething to hide which they dare not bring to light." He therefore encouraged an openneſs of conduct, in women particularly, "who (he obſerved) were often led away when children, by their delight and power of ſurpriſing." He recommended, on ſomething like the ſame principle, that when one perſon meant to ſerve another, he ſhould not go about it ſlily, or as we ſay underhand, out of a falſe idea of delicacy, to ſurpriſe one's friend with an unexpected favour; "which, ten to one (ſays he), fails to oblige your acquaintance, who had ſome reaſons againſt ſuch a mode of obligation, which you might have known but for that ſuperfluous cunning which you

think an elegance. Oh! never be ſeduced by ſuch ſilly pretences (continued he); if a wench wants a good gown, do not give her a fine ſmelling-bottle, becauſe that is more delicate: as I once knew a lady lend the key of her library to a poor ſcribbling dependant, as if ſhe took the woman for an oſtrich that could digeſt iron." He ſaid indeed, "that women were very difficult to be taught the proper manner of conferring pecuniary favours; that they always gave too much money or too little; for that they had an idea of delicacy accompanying their gifts, ſo that they generally rendered them either uſeleſs or ridiculous."

He did indeed ſay very contemptuous things of our ſex; but was exceedingly angry when I told Miſs Reynolds that he ſaid, "It was well managed of ſome one to leave his affairs in the hands of his wife, becauſe, in matters of buſineſs (ſaid he), no woman

ſtops at integrity." This was, I think, the only ſentence I ever obſerved him ſolicitous to explain away after he had uttered it. He was not at all diſpleaſed at the recollection of a ſarcaſm thrown on a whole profeſſion at once; when a gentleman leaving the company, ſomebody who ſate next Dr. Johnſon aſked him, who he was? "I cannot exactly tell you Sir (replied he), and I would be loth to ſpeak ill of any perſon who I do not know deſerves it, but I am afraid he is an *attorney*." He did not however encourage general ſatire, and for the moſt part profeſſed himſelf to feel directly contrary to Dr. Swift; "who (ſays he) hates the world, though he loves John and Robert, and certain individuals."

Johnſon ſaid always, "that the world was well conſtructed, but that the particular people diſgraced the elegance and beauty of the general fabric." In the ſame manner I was relating once to

him, how Dr. Collier obſerved, that the love one bore to children was from the anticipation one's mind made while one contemplated them: "We hope (ſays he) that they will ſome time make wiſe men, or amiable women; and we ſuffer 'em to take up our affection beforehand. One cannot love *lumps of fleſh*, and little infants are nothing more. On the contrary (ſays Johnſon), one can ſcarcely help wiſhing, while one fondles a baby, that it may never live to become a man; for it is *ſo* probable that when he becomes a man, he ſhould be ſure to end in a ſcoundrel." Girls were leſs diſpleaſing to him; "for as their temptations were fewer (he ſaid), their virtue in this life, and happineſs in the next, were leſs improbable; and he loved (he ſaid) to ſee a knot of little miſſes dearly."

Needle-work had a ſtrenuous approver in Dr. Johnſon, who ſaid, "that one of the great felicities of female life, was the general conſent of the

world, that they might amuſe themſelves with petty occupations, which contributed to the lengthening their lives, and preſerving their minds in a ſtate of ſanity." A man cannot hem a pocket-handkerchief (ſaid a lady of quality to him one day), and ſo he runs mad, and torments his family and friends. The expreſſion ſtruck him exceedingly, and when one acquaintance grew troubleſome, and another unhealthy, he uſed to quote Lady Frances's obſervation, "That a man cannot hem a pocket-handkerchief."

The nice people found no mercy from Mr. Johnſon; ſuch I mean as can dine only at four o'clock, who cannot bear to be waked at an unuſual hour, or miſs a ſtated meal without inconvenience. *He* had no ſuch prejudices himſelf, and with difficulty forgave them in another. "Delicacy does not ſurely conſiſt (ſays he) in impoſſibility to be

pleaſed, and that is falſe dignity indeed which is content to depend upon others."

The ſaying of the old philoſopher, who obſerves, That he who wants leaſt is moſt like the gods, who want nothing; was a favourite ſentence with Dr. Johnſon, who on his own part required leſs attendance, ſick or well, than ever I ſaw any human creature. Converſation was all he required to make him happy; and when he would have tea made at two o'clock in the morning, it was only that there might be a certainty of detaining his companions round him. On that principle it was that he preferred winter to ſummer, when the heat of the weather gave people an excuſe to ſtroll about, and walk for pleaſure in the ſhade, while he wiſhed to ſit ſtill on a chair, and chat day after day, till ſomebody propoſed a drive in the coach; and that was the moſt delicious moment of his life. "But the carriage muſt ſtop ſometime (as he ſaid), and

the people would come home at laſt;" ſo his pleaſure was of ſhort duration.

I aſked him why he doated on a coach ſo? and received for anſwer, "That in the firſt place, the company was ſhut in with him *there*; and could not eſcape, as out of a room: in the next place, he heard all that was ſaid in a carriage, where it was my turn to be deaf:" and very impatient was he at my occaſional difficulty of hearing. On this account he wiſhed to travel all over the world; for the very act of going forward was delightful to him, and he gave himſelf no concern about accidents, which he ſaid never happened: nor did the running-away of the horſes on the edge of a precipice between Vernon and St. Denys in France convince him to the contrary; "for nothing came of it (he ſaid), except that Mr. Thrale leaped out of the carriage into a chalk-pit, and then came up again, looking *as white!*" When the truth was, all

their lives were ſaved by the greateſt providence ever exerted in favour of three human creatures; and the part Mr. Thrale took from deſperation was the likelieſt thing in the world to produce broken limbs and death.

Fear was indeed a ſenſation to which Mr. Johnſon was an utter ſtranger, excepting when ſome ſudden apprehenſions ſeized him that he was going to die; and even then he kept all his wits about him, to expreſs the moſt humble and pathetic petitions to the Almighty: and when the firſt paralytic ſtroke took his ſpeech from him, he inſtantly ſet about compoſing a prayer in Latin, at once to deprecate God's mercy, to ſatisfy himſelf that his mental powers remained unimpaired, and to keep them in exerciſe, that they might not periſh by permitted ſtagnation. This was after we parted; but he wrote me an account of it, and I intend to publiſh that letter, with many more.

When one day he had at my houſe taken tincture of antimony inſtead of emetic wine, for a vomit, he was himſelf the perſon to direct us what to do for him, and managed with as much coolneſs and deliberation as if he had been preſcribing for an indifferent perſon. Though on another occaſion, when he had lamented in the moſt piercing terms his approaching diſſolution, and conjured me ſolemnly to tell him what I thought, while Sir Richard Jebb was perpetually on the road to Streatham, and Mr. Johnſon ſeemed to think himſelf neglected if the phyſician left him for an hour only, I made him a ſteady, but as I thought a very gentle harangue, in which I confirmed all that the Doctor had been ſaying, how no preſent danger could be expected; but that his age and continued ill health muſt naturally accelerate the arrival of that hour which can be eſcaped by none: "And this

(ſays Johnſon, riſing in great anger) is the voice of female friendſhip I ſuppoſe, when the hand of the hangman would be ſofter."

Another day, when he was ill, and exceedingly low-ſpirited, and perſuaded that death was not far diſtant, I appeared before him in a dark-coloured gown, which his bad ſight, and worſe apprehenſions, made him miſtake for an iron-grey. "Why do you delight (ſaid he) thus to thicken the gloom of miſery that ſurrounds me? is not here ſufficient accumulation of horror without anticipated mourning?" This is not mourning Sir (ſaid I), drawing the curtain, that the light might fall upon the ſilk, and ſhew it was a purple mixed with green. "Well, well (replied he, changing his voice), you little creatures ſhould never wear thoſe ſort of clothes however; they are unſuitable in every way. What! have not all inſects gay colours!" I relate

theſe inſtances chiefly to ſhew that the fears of death itſelf could not ſuppreſs his wit, his ſagacity, or his temptation to ſudden reſentment.

Mr. Johnſon did not like that his friends ſhould bring their manuſcripts for him to read, and he liked ſtill leſs to read them when they were brought: ſometimes however when he could not refuſe he would take the play or poem, or whatever it was, and give the people his opinion from ſome one page that he had peeped into. A gentleman carried him his tragedy, which, becauſe he loved the author, Johnſon took, and it lay about our rooms ſome time. What anſwer did you give your friend, Sir? ſaid I, after the book had been called for. "I told him (replied he), that there was too much *Tig* and *Tirry* in it." Seeing me laugh moſt violently, "Why what would'ſt have, child?" (ſaid he.) I looked at nothing but the dramatis,

and there was *Tig*ranes and *Tiri*dates, or Teribazus, or ſuch ſtuff. A man can tell but what he knows, and I never got any further than the firſt page. Alas, Madam! (continued he) how few books are there of which one ever can poſſibly arrive at the *laſt* page! Was there ever yet any thing written by mere man that was wiſhed longer by its readers, excepting Don Quixote, Robinſon Cruſoe, and the Pilgrim's Progreſs?" After Homer's Iliad, Mr. Johnſon confeſſed that the work of Cervantes was the greateſt in the world, ſpeaking of it I mean as a book of entertainment; and when we conſider that every other author's admirers are confined to his countrymen, and perhaps to the literary claſſes among *them*, while Don Quixote is a ſort of common property, an univerſal claſſic, equally taſted by the court and the cottage, equally applauded in France and England as in Spain, quoted by every ſervant, the amuſement of every age

from infancy to decrepitude; the firſt book you ſee on every ſhelf, in every ſhop, where books are ſold, through all the ſtates of Italy; who can refuſe his conſent to an avowal of the ſuperiority of Cervantes to all other modern writers? Shakeſpeare himſelf has, till lately, been worſhipped only at home, though his plays are now the favourite amuſements of Vienna; and when I was at Padua ſome months ago, Romeo and Juliet was acted there under the name of *Tragedia Veroneſe*; while engravers and tranſlators *live* by the Hero of La Mancha in every nation, and the ſides of miſerable inns all over England and France, and I have heard Germany too, are adorned with the exploits of Don Quixote. May his celebrity procure my pardon for a digreſſion in praiſe of a writer who, through four volumes of the moſt exquiſite pleaſantry and genuine humour, has never been ſeduced to overſtep the limits of propriety, has never

called in the wretched auxiliaries of obſcenity or profaneneſs; who truſts to nature and ſentiment alone, and never miſſes of that applauſe which Voltaire and Sterne labour to produce, while honeſt merriment beſtows her unfading crown upon Cervantes.

Dr. Johnſon was a great reader of French literature, and delighted exceedingly in Boileau's works. Moliere I think he had hardly ſufficient taſte of; and he uſed to condemn me for preferring La Bruyere to the Duc de Rochefoucault, "who (he ſaid) was the only *gentleman* writer who wrote like a profeſſed author." The aſperity of his harſh ſentences, each of them a ſentence of condemnation, uſed to diſguſt me however; though it muſt be owned, that, among the neceſſaries of human life, a *raſp* is reckoned one as well as a *razor*.

Mr. Johnſon did not like any one who ſaid they were happy, or who ſaid any one elſe was ſo. "It is all *cant* (he would cry), the dog knows he is miſerable all the time." A friend whom he loved exceedingly, told him on ſome occaſion notwithſtanding, that his wife's ſiſter was *really* happy, and called upon the lady to confirm his aſſertion, which ſhe did ſomewhat roundly as we ſay, and with an accent and manner capable of offending Mr. Johnſon, if her poſition had not been ſufficient, without any thing more, to put him in very ill humour. "If your ſiſter-in-law is really the contented being ſhe profeſſes herſelf Sir (ſaid he), her life gives the lie to every reſearch of humanity; for ſhe is happy without health, without beauty, without money, and without underſtanding." This ſtory he told me himſelf; and when I expreſſed ſomething of the horror I felt, "The ſame ſtupidity

(ſaid he) which prompted her to extol felicity ſhe never felt, hindered her from feeling what ſhocks you on repetition. I tell you, the woman is ugly, and ſickly, and fooliſh, and poor; and would it not make a man hang himſelf to hear ſuch a creature ſay, it was happy?"

"The life of a ſailor was alſo a continued ſcene of danger and exertion (he ſaid); and the manner in which time was ſpent on ſhipboard would make all who ſaw a cabin envy a gaol." The roughneſs of the language uſed on board a man of war, where he paſſed a week on a viſit to Capt. Knight, diſguſted him terribly. He aſked an officer what ſome place was called, and received for anſwer, that it was where the loplolly man kept his loplolly: a reply he conſidered, not unjuſtly, as diſreſpectful, groſs, and ignorant; for though in the courſe of theſe Memoirs I have been led to mention Dr. Johnſon's tenderneſs towards *poor*

people, I do not wiſh to miſlead my readers, and make them think he had any delight in *mean* manners or coarſe expreſſions. Even dreſs itſelf, when it reſembled that of the vulgar, offended him exceedingly; and when he had condemned me many times for not adorning my children with more ſhow than I thought uſeful or elegant, I preſented a little girl to him who came o'viſiting one evening covered with ſhining ornaments, to ſee if he would approve of the appearance ſhe made. When they were gone home, Well Sir, ſaid I, how did you like little miſs? I hope ſhe was *fine* enough. "It was the finery of a beggar (ſaid he), and you know it was; ſhe looked like a native of Cow-lane dreſſed up to be carried to Bartholomew-fair."

His reprimand to another lady for croſſing her little child's handkerchief before, and by that operation dragging down its head oddly and unintentionally,

was on the ſame principle. "It is the beggar's fear of cold (ſaid he) that prevails over ſuch parents, and ſo they pull the poor thing's head down, and give it the look of a baby that plays about Weſtminſter-Bridge, while the mother ſits ſhivering in a *niche*."

I commended a young lady for her beauty and pretty behaviour one day however, to whom I thought no objections could have been made. "I ſaw her (ſays Dr. Johnſon) take a pair of ſciſſars in her left hand though; and for all her father is now become a nobleman, and as you ſay exceſſively rich, I ſhould, were I a youth of quality ten years hence, heſitate between a girl ſo neglected, and a *negro*."

It was indeed aſtoniſhing how he *could* remark ſuch minuteneſſes with a ſight ſo miſerably imperfect; but no accidental poſition of a ribband eſcaped him, ſo nice was his obſervation, and ſo rigo-

rous his demands of propriety. When I went with him to Litchfield and came down ſtairs to breakfaſt at the inn, my dreſs did not pleaſe him, and he made me alter it entirely before he would ſtir a ſtep with us about the town, ſaying moſt ſatirical things concerning the appearance I made in a riding-habit; and adding, "'Tis very ſtrange that ſuch eyes as yours cannot diſcern propriety of dreſs: if I had a ſight only half as good, I think I ſhould ſee to the centre."

My compliances however were of little worth: what really ſurpriſed me was the victory he gained over a Lady little accuſtomed to contradiction, who had dreſſed herſelf for church at Streatham one Sunday morning, in a manner he did not approve, and to whom he ſaid ſuch ſharp and pungent things concerning her hat, her gown, &c. that ſhe haſtened to change them, and returning quite another figure received his ap-

plauſe, and thanked him for his reproofs, much to the amazement of her huſband, who could ſcarcely believe his own ears.

Another lady, whoſe accompliſhments he never denied, came to our houſe one day covered with diamonds, feathers, &c. and he did not ſeem inclined to chat with her as uſual. I aſked him why? when the company was gone. "Why; her head looked ſo like that of a woman who ſhews puppets (ſaid he), and her voice ſo confirmed the fancy, that I could not bear her to-day; when ſhe wears a large cap, I can talk to her."

When the ladies wore lace trimmings to their clothes, he expreſſed his contempt of the reigning faſhion in theſe terms: "A Bruſſels trimming is like bread ſauce (ſaid he), it takes away the glow of colour from the gown, and gives you nothing inſtead of it; but

ſauce was invented to heighten the flavour of our food, and trimming is an ornament to the manteau, or it is nothing. Learn (ſaid he) that there is propriety or impropriety in every thing how ſlight ſoever, and get at the general principles of dreſs and of behaviour; if you then tranſgreſs them, you will at leaſt know that they are not obſerved."

All theſe exactneſſes in a man who was nothing leſs than exact himſelf, made him extremely impracticable as an inmate, though moſt inſtructive as a companion, and uſeful as a friend. Mr. Thrale too could ſometimes over-rule his rigidity, by ſaying coldly, There, there, now we have had enough for one lecture, Dr. Johnſon; we will not be upon education any more till after dinner, if you pleaſe—or ſome ſuch ſpeech: but when there was nobody to reſtrain his diſlikes, it was extremely difficult to find any body with whom he could

converſe, without living always on the verge of a quarrel, or of ſomething too like a quarrel to be pleaſing. I came into the room, for example, one evening, where he and a gentleman, whoſe abilities we all reſpect exceedingly, were ſitting; a lady who walked in two minutes before me had blown 'em both into a flame, by whiſpering ſomething to Mr. S——d, which he endeavoured to explain away, ſo as not to affront the Doctor, whoſe ſuſpicions were all alive. "And have a care, Sir (ſaid he), juſt as I came in; the Old Lion will not bear to be tickled." The other was pale with rage, the Lady wept at the confuſion ſhe had cauſed, and I could only ſay with Lady Macbeth,

Soh! you've diſplac'd the mirth, broke the good meeting
With moſt admir'd diſorder.

Such accidents however occurred too often, and I was forced to take advan-

tage of my loſt lawſuit, and plead inability of purſe to remain longer in London or its vicinage. I had been croſſed in my intentions of going abroad, and found it convenient, for every reaſon of health, peace, and pecuniary circumſtances, to retire to Bath, where I knew Mr. Johnſon would not follow me, and where I could for that reaſon command ſome little portion of time for my own uſe; a thing impoſſible while I remained at Streatham or at London, as my hours, carriage, and ſervants had long been at his command, who would not riſe in the morning till twelve o'clock perhaps, and oblige me to make breakfaſt for him till the bell rung for dinner, though much diſpleaſed if the toilet was neglected, and though much of the time we paſſed together was ſpent in blaming or deriding, very juſtly, my neglect of œconomy, and waſte of that money which might make many families happy. The original reaſon of our connection,

his *particularly diſordered health and ſpirits*, had been long at an end, and he had no other ailments than old age and general infirmity, which every profeſſor of medicine was ardently zealous and generally attentive to palliate, and to contribute all in their power for the prolongation of a life ſo valuable. Veneration for his virtue, reverence for his talents, delight in his converſation, and habitual endurance of a yoke my huſband firſt put upon me, and of which he contentedly bore his ſhare for ſixteen or ſeventeen years, made me go on ſo long with Mr. Johnſon; but the perpetual confinement I will own to have been terrifying in the firſt years of our friendſhip, and irkſome in the laſt; nor could I pretend to ſupport it without help, when my coadjutor was no more. To the aſſiſtance we gave him, the ſhelter our houſe afforded to his uneaſy fancies, and to the pains we took to ſooth or repreſs them, the world perhaps is in-

debted for the three political pamphlets, the new edition and correction of his Dictionary, and for the Poets Lives, which he would ſcarce have lived, I think, and kept his faculties entire, to have written, had not inceſſant care been exerted at the time of his firſt coming to be our conſtant gueſt in the country; and ſeveral times after that, when he found himſelf particularly oppreſſed with diſeaſes incident to the moſt vivid and fervent imaginations. I ſhall for ever conſider it as the greateſt honour which could be conferred on any one, to have been the confidential friend of Dr. Johnſon's health; and to have in ſome meaſure, with Mr. Thrale's aſſiſtance, ſaved from diſtreſs at leaſt, if not from worſe, a mind great beyond the comprehenſion of common mortals, and good beyond all hope of imitation from periſhable beings.

Many of our friends were earneſt that he ſhould write the lives of our famous

proſe authors; but he never made any anſwer that I can recollect to the propoſal, excepting when Sir Richard Muſgrave once was ſingularly warm about it, getting up and intreating him to ſet about the work immediately; he coldly replied, "*Sit down, Sir!*"

When Mr. Thrale built the new library at Streatham, and hung up over the books the portraits of his favourite friends, that of Dr. Johnſon was laſt finiſhed, and cloſed the number. It was almoſt impoſſible *not* to make verſes on ſuch an accidental combination of circumſtances, ſo I made the following ones: but as a character written in verſe will for the moſt part be found imperfect as a character, I have therefore written a proſe one, with which I mean, not to complete, but to conclude theſe Anecdotes of the beſt and wiſeſt man that ever came within the reach of my perſonal acquaintance, and I think I

might venture to add, that of all or any of my readers:

Gigantic in knowledge, in virtue, in ſtrength,
Our company cloſes with JOHNSON at length;
So the Greeks from the cavern of Polypheme paſt,
When wiſeſt, and greateſt, Ulyſſes came laſt.
To his comrades contemptuous, we ſee him look down,
On their wit and their worth with a general frown.
Since from Science' proud tree the rich fruit he receives,
Who could ſhake the whole trunk while they turn'd a few leaves.
His piety pure, his morality nice—
Protector of virtue, and terror of vice;
In theſe features Religion's firm champion diſplay'd,
Shall make infidels fear for a modern cruſade.
While th' inflammable temper, the poſitive tongue,
Too conſcious of right for endurance of wrong,
We ſuffer from JOHNSON, contented to find,
That ſome notice we gain from ſo noble a mind;
And pardon our hurts, ſince ſo often we've found
The balm of inſtruction pour'd into the wound.
'Tis thus for its virtues the chemiſts extol
Pure rectified ſpirit, ſublime alcohol;
From noxious putreſcence, preſervative pure,
A cordial in health, and in ſickneſs a cure;
But expos'd to the ſun, taking fire at his rays,
Burns bright to the bottom, and ends in a bla-

It is uſual, I know not why, when a character is given, to begin with a deſcription of the perſon; that which contained the ſoul of Mr. Johnſon deſerves to be particularly deſcribed. His ſtature was remarkably high, and his limbs exceedingly large: his ſtrength was more than common I believe, and his activity had been greater I have heard than ſuch a form gave one reaſon to expect: his features were ſtrongly marked, and his countenance particularly rugged; though the original complexion had certainly been fair, a circumſtance ſomewhat unuſual: his ſight was near, and otherwiſe imperfect; yet his eyes, though of a light-grey colour, were ſo wild, ſo piercing, and at times ſo fierce, that fear was I believe the firſt emotion in the hearts of all his beholders. His mind was ſo comprehenſive, that no language but that he uſed could have expreſſed its contents; and ſo ponderous was his language, that ſentiments leſs lofty and

leſs ſolid than his were, would have been encumbered, not adorned by it.

Mr. Johnſon was not intentionally however a pompous converſer; and though he was accuſed of uſing big words as they are called, it was only when little ones would not expreſs his meaning as clearly, or when perhaps the elevation of the thought would have been diſgraced by a dreſs leſs ſuperb. He uſed to ſay, "that the ſize of a man's underſtanding might always be juſtly meaſured by his mirth;" and his own was never contemptible. He would laugh at a ſtroke of genuine humour, or ſudden ſally of odd abſurdity, as heartily and freely as I ever yet ſaw any man; and though the jeſt was often ſuch as few felt beſides himſelf, yet his laugh was irreſiſtible, and was obſerved immediately to produce that of the company, not merely from the notion that it was proper to laugh when he did, but purely

out of want of power to forbear it. He was no enemy to ſplendour of apparel or pomp of equipage—"Life (he would ſay) is barren enough ſurely with all her trappings; let us therefore be cautious how we ſtrip her." In matters of ſtill higher moment he once obſerved, when ſpeaking on the ſubject of ſudden innovation, —"He who plants a foreſt may doubtleſs cut down a hedge; yet I could wiſh methinks that even he would wait till he ſees his young plants grow."

With regard to common occurrences, Mr. Johnſon had, when I firſt knew him, looked on the ſtill-ſhifting ſcenes of life till he was weary; for as a mind ſlow in its own nature, or unenlivened by information, will contentedly read in the ſame book for twenty times perhaps, the very act of reading it being more than half the buſineſs, and every period being at every reading better underſtood; while a mind more active or more ſkilful to comprehend its meaning is made ſin-

cerely ſick at the ſecond peruſal; ſo a ſoul like his, acute to diſcern the truth, vigorous to embrace, and powerful to retain it, ſoon ſees enough of the world's dull proſpect, which at firſt, like that of the ſea, pleaſes by its extent, but ſoon, like that too, fatigues from its uniformity; a calm and a ſtorm being the only variations that the nature of either will admit.

Of Mr. Johnſon's erudition the world has been the judge, and we who produce each a ſcore of his ſayings, as proofs of that wit which in him was inexhauſtible, reſemble travellers who having viſited Delhi or Golconda, bring home each a handful of Oriental pearl to evince the riches of the Great Mogul. May the Public condeſcend to accept my *ill-ſtrung* ſelection with patience at leaſt, remembering only that they are relics of him who was great on all occaſions, and, like a cube in architec-

ture, you beheld him on each ſide, and his ſize ſtill appeared undiminiſhed.

As his purſe was ever open to almſgiving, ſo was his heart tender to thoſe who wanted relief, and his ſoul ſuſceptible of gratitude, and of every kind impreſſion; yet though he had refined his ſenſibility, he had not endangered his quiet, by encouraging in himſelf a ſolicitude about trifles, which he treated with the contempt they deſerve.

It was well enough known before theſe ſheets were publiſhed, that Mr. Johnſon had a roughneſs in his manner which ſubdued the ſaucy, and terrified the meek: this was, when I knew him, the prominent part of a character which few durſt venture to approach ſo nearly; and which was for that reaſon in many reſpects groſsly and frequently miſtaken; and it was perhaps peculiar to him, that the lofty conſciouſneſs of his own ſupe-

riority, which animated his looks, and raiſed his voice in converſation, caſt likewiſe an impenetrable veil over him when he ſaid nothing. His talk therefore had commonly the complexion of arrogance, his ſilence of ſupercilioufneſs. He was however ſeldom inclined to be ſilent when any moral or literary queſtion was ſtarted: and it was on ſuch occaſions, that, like the ſage in Raſſelas, he ſpoke, and attention watched his lips; he reaſoned, and conviction cloſed his periods: if poetry was talked of, his quotations were the readieſt; and had he not been eminent for more ſolid and brilliant qualities, mankind would have united to extol his extraordinary memory. His manner of repeating deſerves to be deſcribed, though at the ſame time it defeats all power of deſcription; but whoever once heard him repeat an ode of Horace, would be long before they could endure to hear it repeated by another.

His equity in giving the character of living acquaintance ought not undoubtedly to be omitted in his own, whence partiality and prejudice were totally excluded, and truth alone preſided in his tongue: a ſteadineſs of conduct the more to be commended, as no man had ſtronger likings or averſions. His veracity was indeed, from the moſt trivial to the moſt ſolemn occaſions, ſtrict, even to ſeverity; he ſcorned to embelliſh a ſtory with fictitious circumſtances, which (he uſed to ſay) took off from its real value. "A ſtory (ſays Johnſon) ſhould be a ſpecimen of life and manners; but if the ſurrounding circumſtances are falſe, as it is no more a repreſentation of reality, it is no longer worthy our attention."

For the reſt—That beneficence which during his life increaſed the comforts of ſo many, may after his death be perhaps ungratefully forgotten; but that

piety which dictated the ſerious papers in the Rambler, will be for ever remembered; for ever, I think, revered. That ample repoſitory of religious truth, moral wiſdom, and accurate criticiſm, breathes indeed the genuine emanations of its great Author's mind, expreſſed too in a ſtyle ſo natural to him, and ſo much like his common mode of converſing, that I was myſelf but little aſtoniſhed when he told me, that he had ſcarcely read over one of thoſe inimitable eſſays before they went to the preſs.

I will add one or two peculiarities more, before I lay down my pen.—— Though at an immeaſurable diſtance from content in the contemplation of his own uncouth form and figure, he did not like another man much the leſs for being a coxcomb. I mentioned two friends who were particularly fond of looking at themſelves in a glaſs—"They

do not ſurpriſe me at all by ſo doing (ſaid Johnſon): they ſee, reflected in that glaſs, men who have riſen from almoſt the loweſt ſituations in life; one to enormous riches, the other to every thing this world can give—rank, fame, and fortune. They ſee likewiſe, men who have merited their advancement by the exertion and improvement of thoſe talents which God had given them; and I ſee not why they ſhould avoid the mirror."

The other ſingularity I promiſed to record, is this: That though a man of obſcure birth himſelf, his partiality to people of family was viſible on every occaſion; his zeal for ſubordination warm even to bigotry; his hatred to innovation, and reverence for the old feudal times, apparent, whenever any poſſible manner of ſhewing them occurred. I have ſpoken of his piety, his charity, and his truth, the enlargement

of his heart, and the delicacy of his ſentiments; and when I ſearch for ſhadow to my portrait, none can I find but what was formed by pride, differently modified as different occaſions ſhewed it; yet never was pride ſo purified as Johnſon's, at once from meanneſs and from vanity. The mind of this man was indeed expanded beyond the common limits of human nature, and ſtored with ſuch variety of knowledge, that I uſed to think it reſembled a royal pleaſure-ground, where every plant, of every name and nation, flouriſhed in the full perfection of their powers, and where, though lofty woods and falling cataracts firſt caught the eye, and fixed the earlieſt attention of beholders, yet neither the trim parterre nor the pleaſing ſhrubbery, nor even the antiquated ever-greens, were denied a place in ſome fit corner of the happy valley.

THE END.

POSTSCRIPT.

Naples, Feb. 10, 1786.

SINCE the foregoing went to the preſs, having ſeen a paſſage from Mr. Boſwell's Tour to the Hedrides, in which it is ſaid, that *I could not get through Mrs. Montagu's Eſſay on Shakeſpeare*, I do not delay a moment to declare, that, on the contrary, I have always commended it myſelf, and heard it commended by every one elſe; and few things would give me more concern than to be thought incapable of taſting, or unwilling to teſtify my opinion of its excellence.

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